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4

The Two Wings of Wisdom

Mysticism and Philosophy in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* of Ibn Sina

BY

SHOKOUFEH TAGHI

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Shokoufeh Taghi

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Abstract

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This study provides a description of how the idea of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* existed in many spiritual works long before Ibn Sina. Inspired by the content and form of some of the earlier works, Ibn Sina created an epistle which contained his own spiritual itinerary and called it the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. An epistle that reflects the mystical development in the mentality of Ibn Sina in his last years of life. It has been shown that Ibn Sina takes mysticism as a bridge of enlightenment, which leads philosophy to *ḥikma*. From Ibn Sina's point of view, one cannot cross the bridge, unless one has acquired the wings of truthfulness of mind and purity of heart. People with such qualities are of the same origin and gather together as one bird. The one who has crossed the bridge and entered the domain of light becomes *ḥakīm* or *nabī*. With the help of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*, this study illustrates the metamorphosis of a physician-philosopher to a *ḥakīm-nabī*.

It has been done by examining various aspects of Ibn Sina's life and work. Chap. I has been devoted to the life of Ibn Sina within the context of his studies, his journeys and his circle of students. The concern of chap. II has been to describe the extant and available manuscripts of Ibn Sina's *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*, determine their age, interdependence and relationship to the archetype of the text on the basis of external and internal criteria. Chap. III contains a text edition which is based on the oldest extant manuscript of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. Chap. IV is devoted to a new English translation of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. Chap. V shows that the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* of Ibn Sina is a practical treatise for the brothers of truth or brothers of purity. Chap. VI investigates the literary background of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. Chap. VII is concerned with the relation between the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and *Kalīla wa Dimna*. Chap. VIII discusses the influence of the *Rasā'il ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* on the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. Chap. IX demonstrates how Ibn Sina was inspired by the story of *mi'rāj* when he wrote his *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. Chap. X is devoted to a comparison between the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and Ibn Sina's last work, *al-Išārāt*.

Keywords: Ḥikma, Ibn Sina, *al-Išārāt wa't-tanbīhāt, Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā, Kalīla wa Dimna, Mi'rāj-nāma,* mysticism, *Risāla, Ṭair, Risālat uṭ-ṭair,* Sahlān Sāwī.

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Preface

I wish to thank the following libraries for kindly providing me with microfilms of manuscripts and books in their possession: Tehran, Kitābxāna-yi markazī-yi dānišgāh-i Tihrān (Tehran University), Kitābxāna-yi majlis-i šūrā-yi islāmī, Kitābxāna-yi Malik; Istanbul, Ahmet III, Ayasofya; London, British Museum; Oxford, Bodleian Library; Uppsala, Uppsala Universitetsbibliotek, Manuscript Department. Since one year of the work on my dissertation was carried out in New York, I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Ehsan Yarshater, who made it possible for me to have access to the libraries of Columbia University and N.Y.U.

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My heartfelt thanks go to my friend, Dr. Judith Josephson, to her I owe this book, I also owe it, however, to my daughter, Hana Rohani and my master, Mr. Peikan Sheibani. To them I dedicate this book.

Uppsala, 7 September 2000

List of translitteration

Arabic characters

ء	’
ب	b
ث	ṯ
ت	t
ج	j
ح	ḥ
خ	x
د	d
ذ	ḏ
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	š
ص	ṣ
ض	ź
ط	ṭ
ظ	ż
ع	‘
غ	ġ
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
و	w
ه	h
ي	y
ة	ah, at (construct state)

Long vowels

اَ	ā
و	ū
ي	ī

Short vowels

ُ	u
َ	a
ِ	i

Diphthongs

وَ	au
يَ	ai

Persian letters added to the Arabic alphabet

پ	p
چ	č
ژ	ž
گ	g

Introduction

The *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* of Ibn Sina occupies a very special place among the works of Ibn Sina. This small epistle which is only a few pages long has attracted the attention of the most prominent scholars of Iranian Islamic culture. It was translated into Persian for the first time by Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Qāsim ibn Aḥmad ibn Xadiw Axsīkaṭī known as Ḏu'l-Fażā'il (466-528). He was one of the Iranian writers and poets who wrote books in both Arabic and Persian. His Persian translation has been preserved only in the commentary by Ibn Sahlān Sāwī who uses it as his basic text.

Sahlān Sāwī or Sāwaǰī[1] (d. 540), is the author of the Persian commentary of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. He lived in Nišābūr and was an eminent philosopher and jurist at the time of Malikšāh Saljūq.

Inspired by the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* of Ibn Sina, the Ṣūfī master Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Ġazzālī (d. 520/1126) composed a new *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* in Persian. This *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*, known as *Dāstān-i murġān*, is not only one of his best literary works but also a very good example of fifth century Persian prose. He is, however, better known as the author of *Sawāniḥ*, which is the first Persian work on love in the domain of Ṣūfism.[2]

Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad Ġazzālī, the older brother of Aḥmad, was a theologian, jurist, original thinker, mystic and religious reformer.[3] He was born at Ṭūs in Iran in 450/1053 and died in 505/1111. Abū Ḥāmid, who has sometimes been acclaimed in both East and West as the greatest Muslim after Muḥammad,[4] is also the author of a *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* which resembles Aḥmad's epistle in some ways but diverges from it on certain points. H. Ritter believes that this *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* was also originally written by Aḥmad.[5] There is internal evidence in the text which testifies to the accuracy of Ritter's point of view, as for example that Ġazzālī employs a style in writing in the *Risāla* which is not found in his other

---

[1] Sahlān Sāwī has a treatise called *al-Risālat al-Sanjarīya fi'l- kā'ināt al-'unṣurīya*, which is dedicated to Sanjar ibn Malikšāh who reigned between 511-552 A. H.

[2] Prior to Ġazzālī Ibn Sina wrote a treatise on love, known as *Risāla fi'l-'išq* which is addressed to al- Ma'ṣūmī, his famous student. This epistle is in Arabic.

[3] Cf. Montgomery Watt, "Al- Ghazālī," *EI2*, vol. II, p. 1041.

[4] Cf. Montgomery Watt, *The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazālī*, p. 14.

[5] Ritter, *Das Meer der Seele*, p. 10.

works, an instance being the usage of poems to illustrate difficult concepts.

The first great poet of *taṣawwuf*, Abu'l-Majd Majdūd Sanā'ī (born in Ġazna or Balx about the middle of the 5th century and died in 525/1130-1) wrote a treatise in the form of a *maṭnawī* entitled *Risāla-yi sair ul-'Ibād ila'l-ma'ād.* Apart from the style of writing, the contents of the *Risāla* are very similar to the three *Risālat uṭ-ṭairs*, which were composed before him. It is important to note that the Ṣūfi Ġazzālī was the first prominent scholar of his time to compose a Ṣūfi treatise in Persian on the subject of love and Sanā'ī was the first Persian poet to employ the terminology of lyric verse in his poetry to express his Ṣūfi doctrine.

Šahāb ud-dīn Yaḥyā ibn Ḥabaš ibn Amīrak, Abu'l-Futūḥ, known as Suhrawardī entitled Šaix ul-išrāq, was born in Suhraward, a province in Iran, in 549/1155 and was put to death by the order of Ṣalāḥ ud-dīn on a charge of heresy in Aleppo in 587/1191. He was a philosopher-scientist who founded the school of *Ḥikmat ul-išrāq*. Suhrawardi's principal and most characteristic work is also called *Kitāb ḥikmat ul-išrāq* "The Philosophy of Illumination". Suhrawardī, who had studied Ibn Sina's works in his youth, wrote many allegorical treatises in Persian in a version which were influenced by the works of Ibn Sina. He also rendered the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* of Ibn Sina into Persian, which may be considered as Suhrawardī's own *Risālat uṭ-ṭair.* The translation of Axsīkaṭī is very faithful to the Arabic version, while in the rendering by Suhrawardī, a few points have been added in order to clarify the text according to his own interpretation.

Farīd ud-dīn Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad 'Aṭṭār (d. around 617 A. H.) is one of the greatest Ṣūfi poets of all times and his fame lies chiefly in his maṭnawī *Manṭiq uṭ-ṭair.* In composing his Ṣūfi masterpiece, 'Aṭṭār was inspired both in form and in content by Ibn Sina's, the two Ġazzālis', al-Suhrawardī's and Sanā'ī's epistles.

Najm ud-dīn Rāzī, known as Najm-i Dāya (d. 654 A. H.), was the last Ṣūfi scholar to compose a *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* in Persian the contents of which show that the author was influenced by Sanā'ī's *Risāla-yi sair ul-'Ibād ila'l-ma'ād.* The *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* of Rāzī is a beautiful literary work in prose, which represents a fine example of seventh century style.[6] Najm-i Dāya, who was a disciple of Majd ud-dīn al-Baġdādī, is also the author of several Ṣūfi works both in Arabic and Persian, the most of which important are *Mirṣād ul-'ibād* and *Risāla-yi 'išq wa 'aql.*

Concerning the composition of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* I have made a brief survey of the life of the above mentioned authors and I have posed two

[6] This work is found in a collection, kept under No. 1589 in the Köprülü library. For more information about this collection see the chapter on manuscripts in this study.

questions. First, what was so important about the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* that it interested the greatest scholars of Islamic Iranian culture and what did these scholars have in common? All of them wrote works in both Persian and Arabic, except Sanā'ī and 'Aṭṭār whose works belong to Persian literature. Second, how was Ibn Sina himself inspired by the idea of the flight of the soul in creating his *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and which books and scholars were his sources of inspiration?

In order to answer these questions I undertook a study which resulted in the present book. My study of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* of Ibn Sina falls naturally into two parts. The first part is focused on the life of Ibn Sina. In chapter I, I give an account of his life based on my primary source, the autobiography/biography known as the *Risāla-yi sarguḏašt*. Other sources that I have also consulted are the well-known biographical works of Arab scholars such as al-Qifṭī, Baihaqī, Ibn Abī Uṣaibi'a and Ibn al-Xalikān, as well as the historical accounts recorded by Muslim historians. In this chapter my aim is to demonstrate the interrelation between the account of Ibn Sina's life and the contents of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. To achieve this result I have divided the life of Ibn Sina into seven journeys related to the seven stages of his life, which correspond to the seven mountains in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. It is also my concern to show that the two treatises are two faces of the coin of Ibn Sina's life and that the one is supposed to complete the other.

The second chapter introduces all extant manuscripts of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. It deals with the description of the manuscripts of the *Risāla* as well as its Persian translations and Arabic and Persian commentaries. In this chapter I try to establish the archetype of the manuscripts of the *Risāla* and attempt to relate it to the original version.

The third chapter contains a text edition which is accompanied by my own translation into English and a detailed commentary on the text. The main concern of chapter three is to reconstruct the original text of Ibn Sina. My method may be briefly described as follows: I first selected thirteen manuscripts and two printed editions which appeared to be the most trustworthy based on age and correctness. Next, I undertook a comparison of all the material found in each of these versions. For this purpose I divided the texts into the smallest possible units and noted every dot, *ḥamza* or any other changes in each word. I have reported all the variants in the apparatus. I tried to restore the most correct form on the basis of what appeared to be closest to the original in the main text. I studied the relationship of the manuscripts and as a primary result of my investigation I found two different traditions in the copying of the text which existed as early as 580 A. H.

In the chapter on the commentary, the fourth chapter, I first give the interpretation made by various commentators of the text, then I make

my own comment with a Ṣūfī tendency, based upon my understanding of Ibn Sina's own writings.

In the sixth chapter, I trace the semantic background of the terms *risāla* and *ṭair* in the *Qur'ān* and I also search for the symbolic meaning of *risāla* and *ṭair* in the history of Islamic thought. In this chapter I make an attempt to establish a Qur'ānic background for the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. I deal with the style of the composition of the *Risāla* and compare it with Ibn Sina's other Persian works. Chapter seven is focused on *Kalīla wa Dimna* as the most prominent historical background of the *Risāla*. In this chapter I examine modern scholars' views about the existence of Burzūya and I study the relationship between Ibn Sina, Ibn al-Muqaffa', Burzūya and Bīdpāy, the narrator of *Pančatantra*. I conclude this chapter with a comparison between the contents of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and *Kalīla wa Dimna* and *Pančatantra*.

The eighth chapter is concentrated on a comparison between the *Rasā'il ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* and the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. Here my intention is to show that Ibn Sina was not only familiar with the contents of the *Rasā'il* but has also integrated some of their ideas into his *Risāla*. In the ninth chapter I make an attempt to prove that the story of the *mi'rāj* of the Prophet provided a model for the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. I also endeavor to demonstrate that the *Mi'rāj-nāma* is one of Ibn Sina's works. In order to prove my theory I consult other works of Ibn Sina, such as *Dāniš-nāma*, *Risāla-yi nafs*, and *Rag-šināsī*. Finally I give a sentence by sentence comparison between the *Mi'rāj-nāma* and the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. In the tenth chapter I analyze the relation between the book of *al-Išārāt wa't-tanbīhāt* and the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and I demonstrate my thesis in a comparison between the contents of three of the classes (*namaṭ*) of the book (*Maqāmat al-'ārifīn*) and the *Risāla*. My aim in this chapter is to prove that the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* is the last or one of the last epistles of Ibn Sina, as its contents are closely related to the contents of the book of *al-Išārāt wa't-tanbīhāt*.

In the Conclusion I argue that the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* of Ibn Sina is a mystical treatise in which Ibn Sina gives a metaphorical account of the threefold journey of the soul, symbolized by a bird. The bird commences her downward journey on the occasion of the fall from heaven. She is held in captivity where she tries to untie her material fetters and find her way back towards her country of origin. On her upward journey she apprehends the presence of the Great King, the Active Intellect. After experiencing this she embarks on her third journey accompanied by a messenger. This is a downward journey but does not represent a fall since the soul has already been elevated to the angelic state.

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* Ibn Sina makes a distinction between a brother of truth and a follower of falsehood. He shows how a seeker of the truth

may follow the path in order to reach the ultimate station. In order to instruct his followers Ibn Sina gives an allegoric exhortation. He defines the various stations of the path through the upward journey of the birds. At the end of the upward journey he describes the theophany of God. It is at the end the *Risāla* that he indirectly claims that he has reached the prophetic state.

It is important to clarify that what Ibn Sina meant by reaching the prophetic state was different from how this was conceived of by religion. A prophet in terms of religion is the one who is selected by God and possesses a book of revelation. In the domain of Islamic philosophy, reaching the state of prophethood is the ultimate goal of a philosopher who attains the state of *ḥikma*. In other words *ḥakīm* is a synonym for prophet. It is in this sense that in Islamic philosophy Plato was included among the prophets. The meaning of prophethood was a subject of great dispute in the Islamic medieval era.

Thus Ibn Sina in his *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* introduces his *ḥikmat al-mašriqīya* in a metaphoric way. It may be defined briefly as follows: It is the path of truth, which is followed by a chosen follower, a brother of truth, the one who is awakened by the herald of the divine summons. Through philosophy, which is the love of all knowledge, and an ascetic style of life he will ultimately reach the prophetic state. This state may be likened to a mirror through which the prophet conceives the truth. This state is called *ḥikmat* and, because of its relation to the world of the soul, it is called *al-mašriqīya*, a term which contradicts *al-maġribīya*, standing for the absence of sun and consequently the darkness of the world of matter, the prison in which the bird of soul is imprisoned.

CHAPTER I

Ibn Sina: His life, his studies, his journeys

Since Abū 'Alī Ḥusain ibn 'Abdu'llāh, referred to as Ibn Sina (Lat. Avicenna d. 428 A. H.) was one of the greatest Muslim philosophers and physicians. His life and works have been described and analyzed in so many philosophical, scientific and literary contexts that one would find it difficult to add anything new to this enormous corpus.

In this chapter, therefore, I do not intend to review the accounts made by the many biographers of Ibn Sina's life. Rather, I would like to suggest that we can gain new insight into how he presented his own life by taking the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* into consideration and comparing it with the account of his life as it was portrayed in the *Risāla-yi sarguḏašt*. In other words I believe that these two works are two aspects of one concept and that through them Ibn Sina presents a mirror of the physical and spiritual dimensions of his own life.

In order to explain my theory, I will discuss the life of Ibn Sina from the point of view of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*, and attempt to show that these two treatises can be regarded as one book of instruction. Moreover, I intend to analyze a few important historical moments of Ibn Sina's life, such as the date of his birth or the dates of his journeys, examine their exactitude and suggest new solutions. My task here is not to question the authenticity of the *Risāla-yi sarguḏašt* in general but to inquire about some points which cannot be reconciled with history. In order to demonstrate the contradictory points in the treatise of Ibn Sina's life, I will compare statements taken from different parts of the same treatise to show how they are at variance with each other.

Afterwards, I shall try to draw a distinction between the historical Ibn Sina and the mythical personage. Finally, I shall attempt to prove that the life he reportedly led was (or was constructed to be) congruent with his philosophical doctrine. It is with this in mind that I shall discuss the life of Ibn Sina within the context of his studies, his journeys and his circle of students.

The basis of my hypothesis is the striking resemblance between the contents of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and various aspects of Ibn Sina's own life as it is presented in the *Risāla-yi sarguḏašt*. Indeed, according to the contents of the latter treatise, the life of Ibn Sina falls into seven periods each linked with a journey which consequently leads to a higher state of

being. In other words the seven journeys of his real life are meant to be associated with the seven stages of the spiritual growth of his philosophical belief. This is the path which has been clearly depicted in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. Accordingly, each journey of Ibn Sina's own life represents a movement towards a new level as well as the abandonment of the older state. Thus, in this chapter I will endeavor to sketch the picture Ibn Sina presented of the path of spiritual growth in his own life.

There are various ways of reviewing the life of Ibn Sina; one is reading the accounts presented by his biographers, the other is studying his own writings about his life in the form of letters and treatises including the autobiography and the third is to combine both of these studies. In writing about his life I have decided to choose the third alternative. A brief description of material on the life of Ibn Sina follows.

A. Historical sources

The account of Ibn Sina's life is known to us through an Arabic treatise (autobiography/biography)[1] compiled by his disciple and companion, Abū 'Ubaid 'Abdū'l-Waḥīd Jūzjānī (d. 438). This treatise has come down to us in at least two recensions. One was recorded by al-Qifṭī and Ibn Abī Uṣaibi'a [2] and the other exists independently in various manuscripts.[3] In addition to these two recensions there are many other sources, both biographical and historical, in which the life of Ibn Sina has been treated from various points of view. One example of the former is *Tatimma ṣiwān al-ḥikma* by Žahīr ad-dīn 'Abu'l-Ḥasan Baihaqī (d. 565)[4] and an example of the latter is *al-Bidāya wa'l-nihāya* by Ibn Kaṭīr (d. 774),[5] In addition there are the fictional accounts in which the legendary Ibn Sina is presented. An example of this is illustrated by the episodes in *Čahār maqāla* [6] and other examples can be found in various Persian tales in which Ibn Sina or Bū 'Alī has been introduced as either a divine physician or a magician.[7] Those tales and the legendary character of Ibn Sina have exerted such a pervasive influence on Persian folklore and Ṣūfī literature that even Jalāl ud-dīn Rūmī has employed some of them in his *Maṭnawī*.

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[1] According to al-Qifṭī, Ibn Sina dictated the first part (autobiography) to one of his students who had asked him about his life. Cf. al- Qifṭī, *Axbār al-ḥukamā,* ed. Lippert, p. 413; cf. Ibn Abī Uṣaibi'a, *'Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā',* ed. Müler, vol. II, p. 4.

[2] Ibn Abī Uṣaibi'a, *ibid.,* p. 2.

[3] Cf. Ms. British Museum Add. 16, 659. ff. 4b-7b.

[4] Baihaqī, *Tatimma ṣiwān al-ḥikma*, ed. Šafī', pp. 38-61; Persian ed. pp. 34-47.

[5] Cf. Ibn Kaṭīr al-Quraišī al-Dimišqī, *al-Bidāya wa'l-nihāya*, part 11, pp. 42-45.

[6] Niżāmī 'Arūżī, *Čahār maqāla*, ed. Qazwīnī, pp. 9 f., 81 f., 85-90.

[7] Ṣafā, *"Ibn Sīnā dar dāstānhā-yi īrānī," Jašn-nāma-yi Ibn Sīnā*, vol. II, pp. 413-429.

To find the most correct version of the *Risāla-yi sarguḏašt* or Ibn Sina's life, I have examined a number of texts both in Persian and Arabic and I have chosen Gohlman's printed edition (*The life of Ibn Sina*) and the English translation by Arberry (*Avicenna on theology*). Apart from these two I have consulted the Mss. Ayasofya 4852 and Topkapī Sarayī 3063. *Tatimma ṣiwān al-ḥikma* by Baihaqī (d. A. H. 565), *Axbār al-ḥukamā*, by al-Qifṭī (d. A. H. 646)[8] while *Wafayāt al-a'yān* by Ibn Xalikān (d. A. H. 681)[9] and *Kitāb 'uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*[10] by Ibn Abī Uṣaibi'a (d. A. H. 668) were studied carefully in order to get a better understanding of Ibn Sina's life. Last but not least history books written during his lifetime, as well as after his time, were also studied in order to obtain a clear picture of the Samanid period during which he lived.

The treatise on Ibn Sina's life, *Risāla-yi sarguḏašt*, falls into two parts, as was mentioned above. According to al-Qifṭī the first part, (written in autobiographical form) was dictated by Ibn Sina to his disciple, Jūzjānī, and then the second part (biography) was appended to it.[11] This treatise *(Risāla-yi sarguḏašt)* has been handed down to later generations of biographers with minor changes without anyone ever questioning the true nature of the contents.

In order to understand the function of Ibn Sina's autobiography as a model for his students it is necessary to see it in its cultural context. Long before Ibn Sina teachers practiced the same tradition. It was common for a teacher or master of a way of life to instructed and exhorted their followers by giving an account of a master's life as exemplifying a certain type of education as guidance for by a follower. In other words a path of learning and self-discipline was given flesh and blood by the life-story of one of its masters. The most famous of these autobiographies in antiquity was the biography attributed to Aristotle. A tradition of the same type appeared in Manichean teachings long before the advent of Islam. After Islam the accounts of the Prophet's life and his foremost followers, who were called *Aṣḥāb aṣ-ṣuffa*, provided the material with which followers and disciples of different circles were instructed. This way of exhortation, which was based on concrete and practical material, gradually led to a kind of teaching in which spirituality was first defined in abstract terms and then exemplified by the highly structured biography of a master. The 'Life' gives practical advice on how to attain spiritual heights. Such treatises of guidance in the period preceding Ibn Sina and during the time of his intellectual and spiritual formation

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[8] Al-Qifṭī, *Axbār*, p. 412-426.

[9] Ibn Xalikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, pp. 190-194.

[10] Ibn Abī Uṣaibi'a, *'Uyūn*, vol. II, pp. 2-20.

[11] Cf. Ms. British Museum Add. 16,659, ff. 4b-7b.

ordinarily consisted of two parts. This is amply illustrated by the teaching material composed by Ṣūfī masters like al-Sulamī, Hujwīrī, Anṣārī and al-Qušairī who all followed this same style of teaching in instructing their followers. They all first wrote or dictated their theories and then completed their theoretical teaching with the accounts of saints' lives. In other words their books of instruction contain a theoretical part which represents the abstract form of their teaching and a concrete and illustrated section which served as a practical education.

It is therefore reasonable to believe that Ibn Sina, following either Aristotle[12] or the Ṣūfī tradition of his time, dictated his autobiography not only in order to answer his disciples' request but also to leave them a description of his life as a model of a way to follow in order to reach a certain spiritual state. Similarly, the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair,* as will be discussed in the next chapter, sets down rules for an association of spiritual brothers who have gathered around a master who illustrates the path of the soul that they should follow. It is interesting to observe that the autobiography is written in the first person and that the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* is also recounted in the first person. This suggests that they are both stories of Ibn Sina's life, one based on the real events of his actual physical life and the other a corresponding description of his spiritual progress. Now we return to the story of Ibn Sina's life as a model which illustrates the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* a story in which Ibn Sina never stays in one place for a long time, moves on and remains concealed whenever it is necessary, as is expressed in the following statement extracted from the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair.*"Be ever in flight and never settle in a nest to which you return, for birds are captured in their nests. If lack of wings hinders you, get them by force and win! Indeed the best of vanguards are those who are strong in flight."[13]

B. Xurmaiṭan: Birth and childhood

According to the autobiography, Ibn Sina's father, 'Abdu'llāh, moved from Balx to Buxārā[14] during the reign of the Samanid Nūḥ ibn Manṣūr[15] to serve as governor in Xurmaiṭan.[16] There he married a girl

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[12] Cf. Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian tradition*, where he has demonstrated that Ibn Sina's autobiography follows the same pattern as that of Aristotle. See p. 196 f.

[13] Ibn Sina, the section of the testament (*waṣīyya*).

[14] Buxārā (Sanskrit. Vihāra), which was once the ancient site of Nowbahār, the renowned Buddhist monastery, became the capital city of the Samanids as well as the religious and intellectual center of the time. Ibn Sina's father, whose religion is known to us through his son's accounts, was deeply influenced by the Ismā'īlīs, the popular Šī'īte movement of the time of the Samanids.

[15] Nūḥ II, the ninth Samanid amir, who succeeded his father at the age of thirteen and reigned about twenty-two years, apparently died at the age of thirty five: 366/976-

(Sitāra) from Afšana,[17] who later bore him two sons, Ibn Sina and his younger brother Maḥmūd or 'Alī.

Ibn Sina does not give a date of birth in his *Risāla-yi saguḍašt*. According to the account of his life recorded by Ibn Abī Uṣaibi'a he was born in 375 and died in 428 when he was only 53 years old.[18] Ibn Xalikān accepts the dates 370-428[19] given by Baihaqī.[20]

Before we accept the date of his birth it is important to consult the accounts of related events given by the autobiography. If Ibn Sina's father migrated to Buxārā during the reign of Nūḥ II, it would have to have been after 365/979, which is the year in which Nūḥ II succeeded to the throne after his father at the age of thirteen. If Ibn Sina's father came to Buxārā in 366 to serve in the position in Xurmaiṭan and married Sitāra about the same year then the year 367 would be the year that Ibn Sina was born. Nafīsī in *Pūr-i Sīnā* has accepted Ibn Xalikān and Baihaqī's accounts giving 370 as the year of his birth as has also Jalāl Humā'ī[21] while Mu'īn has chosen the year 373.[22]

On my part, I cannot accept any of these dates, on the grounds that they are contradicted by the accounts of the autobiography. I suggest the year 367 as the year of Ibn Sina's birth as it is congruent with the historical accounts and the treatise of Ibn Sina's life. In order to substantiate my statement, I would like to draw attention to the point that Nūḥ II died in 387, and, if we accept that Ibn Sina was born in 370, then he would have been 17 years old when the Amir died. But this cannot possibly be correct because according to the contents of the autobiography he was about eighteen years old when he was summoned to the court. In his autobiography Ibn Sina stresses that he had mastered the *Qur'ān* and belles-lettres (*adab*) when he was ten. He had studied medicine by the age of sixteen, and then he devoted the next eighteen months to reading and studying philosophy a second time "I was now a master of Logic, natural sciences and mathematics, I therefore returned to metaphysics."[23] and this task was completed just a short time before the Samanid Amir fell ill. With a simple calculation one can deduce that Ibn

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387/997. For more accounts of Nūh's life, see *Mujmal ut-tawārīx wa'l-Qiṣaṣ*, p. 38; Mustaufī, *Tārīx-i guzīda*, p. 385; Nafīsī, *Zindagī u kār u andīša u rūzgār-i Pūr-i Sīnā*, p. 1.

[16] *Xur* signifies sun and *maiṭan* is identical with *mīhan* meaning country or land.

[17] A village close to Buxārā.

[18] Cf. Ibn Abī Uṣaibi'a, *'Uyun*, p. 9.

[19] Ibn Xalikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, vol. II, p. 193.

[20] Cf. Baihaqī, *Tatimma*, p. 39.

[21] Cf. Humā'ī, *"Rābiṭa-yi Ibn Sīnā wa Iṣfahān," Jašn-nāma-yi Ibn Sīnā*, vol. II, footnote p. 22.

[22] Mu'īn, *Ta'līqāt-i Čahār maqāla*, p. 34.

[23] Arberry, *Avicenna*, pp. 11 f.

Sina must have been at least eighteen before being summoned to the court of the Samanids.

Thus, according to the contents of the autobiography, Ibn Sina was already eighteen or even older when he was enrolled in the service of the Amir. It is also ascertained that Nūḥ II died in 387/997. Thus, Ibn Sina could not have been less than nineteen when the Amir died. In other words Ibn Sina was nineteen or even twenty in 387. Therefore it makes sense to accept an earlier date than 370 as the year of his birth. The year 367 A. H. is a good choice as he himself stresses in the autobiography the years he had studied philosophy and metaphysics before he was summoned to the court of the Samanids.

C. Buxāra: Twelve years of study

It is stated in the autobiography of Ibn Sina "Later we moved to Buxārā where I was put under the teachers of the *Qur'ān* and the letters."[24] Further information given by Ibn Sina about his education implies that he had studied he *Qur'ān* and belles-lettres (*adab*) by the age of ten. He also stresses that people were greatly amazed by his ability to learn. After this he mentions the Ismā'īlī faith of his father and his brother, and then proceeds to speak about the way he responded to their invitation to join them. According to the autobiography he had become acquainted with Ismā'īlī doctrine and the *Rasā'il ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* already by about the age of ten. Ibn Sina heard from him and his younger brother the account of the soul and intellect in the special manner in which the Ismā'īlīs perceive it to be. Ibn Sina, who comprehended the subject matter they discussed, declined in his soul to accept their interpretation.[25] This statement by Ibn Sina indicates that his younger brother, who was five years younger than he, was mature enough mentally to engage in the discussion. This would imply that his five year old brother was also acquainted with the concept of soul and intellect. It is indeed hard to believe that even a precocious child like Ibn Sina could understand such concepts at such an early age. However, the account in the treatise stresses the statement and all biographers have accepted it as a fact. Although Ibn Sina rejects the Ismā'īlī interpretation of the soul and intellect there is considerable uncertainty among scholars as to whether he was an adherent of the Ismā'īlī faith or not. Even recent biographers cannot overcome their doubt regarding Ibn Sina's faith. Ivanov is convinced that he was an Ismā'īlī who concealed his faith because of the religious fanaticism of the day. Some other biographers including Gutas disagree with Ivanov's view

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[24] Arberry, *ibid.*, p. 9.

[25] Cf. Gohlman, *The life of Ibn Sina*, p. 18 f.

on this question, and see no reason for Ibn Sina to hide his belief. In Gutas's opinion if Ibn Sina had had any sympathy for the doctrines of the Ismā'īlīs he would have acknowledged it.[26]

A discussion of this matter would require a comparative study of Ibn Sina's books and treatises and those of the Ismā'īlī's before a conclusion could be drawn. This is beyond the scale of the present study and I will therefore refrain from comment on this matter. What is of importance in the present context is to draw attention to the point that Ibn Sina followed the traditional Ismā'īlī concept of education in the early stages of his studies. Thus his curriculum was based on the same combination of subjects as that used in the Ismā'īlī schools. This can be observed in the *Risāla-yi sarguḏašt* which will be discussed shortly. According to the *Risāla-yi sarguḏašt* they (possibly his father and his companions of Ismā'īlī belief) introduced him to philosophy, geometry and Indian arithmetic. Then he was sent to a certain greengrocer[27] (Maḥmūd Massāḥ)[28] to be taught Indian calculus and algebra. Ibn Sina accomplished this task before he began to study jurisprudence *fiqh* with Ismā'īl Zāhid. He was still studying under the authority of Ismā'īl Zāhid when the philosopher 'Abdu'llāh al-Nātilī [29] came to Buxārā. He was invited by Ibn Sina's father to stay in their house where he taught Ibn Sina *Isāġujī*, Euclid and *Almagest*. During a period of six years he studied arithmetic, geometry, logic, philosophy and medicine both under the philosopher Natilī and by himself. In other words the education he received, with its roots in the Ismā'īlī, *Kitāb al-išārāt* study of the Greek disciplines, destined him to become a Muslim Aristotelian philosopher as such schooling differed from the education provided for theologians or Ṣūfīs, both of which had established schools in Xurāsān and Baġdād at that time. It was about this time that Ṣūfī masters like Abū Sa'īd ibn Abi'l-Xair and Imām al-Qušairī led their circles in their *xānaqās* and the followers of the *Ḥanafī* and *Šāfi'ī* schools of law ran their mosques.

Accordingly, all three schools of thoughts, namely, philosophy, theology and mysticism (*taṣawwuf*) had their traditional ways of

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[26] Cf. Gutas, *Avicenna,* p. 192 f.

[27] At that time learned men and Ṣūfīs had a profession by which they made a living. The only people who received wages for teaching were those who had schools (*maktab/ dabīristān*; otherwise to spread knowledge was considered a religious duty. Cf. Nafīsī, *Zindagī*, p. 110.

[28] Cf. Baihaqī, *Tatimma,* p. 40.

[29] Abū 'Abdu'llāh Ḥusain ibn Ibrāhīm Ṭabarī Nātilī was from Nātil or Nātila in Ṭabaristān. He was one of those great learned men of the time. He came to Buxārā and was invited to Ibn Sina's parental house when Ibn Sina was a child. Ibn Sina studied *Isāġujī*, *Euclid* and *Almagest* with him. Then he left Buxārā for Gurgānj, the capital city of the Ma'mūnids in Xuārazm. Cf. Baihaqī, *Tatimma*, p. 22 f; Nafīsī, *Zindagī,* p. 138.

instructing their followers. Clearly Ibn Sina did not belong to the school of mysticism or religion, but to the school of Islamic philosophy which gradually showed a tendency towards mysticism. The teachings of this school were based on the study of religious and philosophical treatises, which provided material towards a reinterpretation of religious material. Among the learned circles of the period the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* were most famous for following this pattern in their teachings. Nāṣir-i Xusrau in his book *Jāmi' ul-ḥikmatain* regards philosophy and religion as the two pillars on which the whole school of the Ismā'īlī faith is based. The account of Ibn Sina's life shows that during his entire life he followed the same way of learning and teaching, although he developed his own way of thought which was independent from other schools of thought. The continuation of the account in the *Risāla-yi sarguḍašt* confirms that he was brought up as a Muslim philosopher in the same way that the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣāfa* and the Ismāī'lī thinkers had been.

Then Nātilī took leave of Ibn Sina and moved to Gurgānj. Ibn Sina studied medicine on his own and perfected his aptitude so much through experience that qualified physicians began to study medicine with him. Thus, by the age of sixteen Ibn Sina's education had gone through three phases and it was time to study metaphysics. The last stages lasted eighteen months during which he (according to the autobiography) studied logic, philosophy and mathematics day and night without a moment of rest.[30] He continued to use the same method in his studies until he had made himself the master of sciences; "I now comprehended them to the limits of human possibility. All that I learned during that time is exactly as I know now, I have added nothing more to my knowledge to this day."[31]

The above quotation, mentioned by all sources, conveys that Ibn Sina mastered all the physical sciences to such a point that no human being can reach a higher level of understanding than he. This statement occurs before he began to study metaphysics and immediately after it he points out his interest in metaphysics and the difficulty he faced in understanding the *Metaphysics* by Aristotle.[32] Here we are confronted with a contradiction in the text. How could he master all knowledge to the highest level when he had not yet studied metaphysics, and then when he has learned it he repeats the same statement about his level of accomplishment. This becomes clear when we refer to the autobiography.

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[30] Al- Qiftī, *Axbār*, p. 415; Ibn Abī Uṣaibi'a, *ibid.*, p. 3.

[31] Arberry, *Avicenna*, p. 11; al- Qiftī, *Axbār*, p. 415; Ibn Abī Uṣaibi'a, *Kitāb 'uyūn al-anbā'*, p. 3; Baihaqī, *Tatimma*, p. 41.

[32] The book was a free translation from Greek to Syriac and from Syriac to Arabic, and each translator had added, commented or eliminated some part of the original text. Because of that the book was very difficult to understand.

In the autobiography Ibn Sina states that when he finally understood the *Object of Metaphysics* through Fārābī's commentary, it happened that the Amir of Buxārā fell sick. He succeeded in curing the Amir in collaboration with other physicians. Then Ibn Sina was granted admittance to the royal library where he found the most marvelous collection of books he had ever seen in his life; "I read these books, taking notes of their contents, I came to realize the place each man occupied in his particular science."[33]

Thus, the two statements contradict each other.[34] He could not possibly have achieved the highest level of human capacity, then fail to understand metaphysics even though the book was a bad translation from Syriac into Arabic, and again, after reading and studying all the books in the royal library, make the same statement about his level of knowledge. Moreover, he could not have been eighteen both before he reached the court of the Samanids and after he entered the service of the Amir and as a result gained access to his library.

It was in fact the studying of the books of the library that allowed Ibn Sina to perfect his knowledge. In this context he states: "I entered a mansion with many chambers, each chamber having chests of books piled one upon another."[35] There he found books on language, poetry, law and the works of the ancient Greeks. According to Ibn Sina he had neither seen nor read many of those books before, while at the same time we know from the same text that he was a professional reader who had studied all available books on medicine, logic, philosophy, etc. In fact his name was famous even at the court because of the breadth of his reading.

Thus, for a young scholar like Ibn Sina who learned more from the books than teachers[36] the experience of that magnificent library was a breakthrough. He was probably so enthusiastic about the library that his enemies blamed the fire that destroyed it on him.[37] Thus, the library was a very important stage of Ibn Sina's scholastic life without which he could not have perfected his knowledge. In this case we are obliged to dispute his earlier statement made in the autobiography regarding his perfect understanding of the sciences at the highest level of the human capacity.[38]

Ibn Sina had one more phase of intellectual growth in Buxārā before he left the city for Gurgānj. He composed a comprehensive book on the

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[33] Arberry, *Avicenna*, p. 13.

[34] Gutas, in his book *Avicenna,* does not see it as a contradiction. Cf. p. 189.

[35] Arberry, *Avicenna*, p. 14.

[36] He says so in the autobiography but this may be a way of emphasizing his independence from any school of thought.

[37] Cf. Baihaqī, *Tatimma,* p. 43.

[38] Cf. al-Qifṭī, *Axbār*, p. 415.

various subjects of sciences except mathematics at the request of one Abu'l-Ḥasan al-'Arūźī and dedicated the book which he called *al-Majmū'* to him. According to the treatise, another work written by him before he left Buxārā at the age of twenty-two was *al-Ḥāṣil wa'l-maḥṣūl* in twenty volumes.[39]

The importance of this part of the autobiography lies in the instructive material Ibn Sina gives to his students. By describing his education and schooling in this way he endeavors to show his students and those who are interested in acquiring the philosophical sciences, that learning philosophy requires a systematic way of education. This education begins with learning the *Qur'ān* and *adab* and ends with metaphysics. He mentions that in the library of the Samanids he learned the place each man occupied in his particular science. This statement is very much in accordance with what the *Rasā'il ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* state regarding the kind of books the Brothers should study. They confine the fourth and highest class of the books to divine books in which the Brothers become acquainted with the lives of divine philosophers.[40]

In his autobiography Ibn Sina also draws attention to the necessity for diligent study and gives his own case as an example. He emphasizes the fact that he studied the *Metaphysics* by Aristotle forty times in order to understand it. In other words he makes an attempt to instruct his own students, encouraging them to work hard regardless of their intelligence. A third point he makes is that metaphysics is not an easy science like medicine. To attain knowledge in metaphysics one must master all other sciences first. Then one must study the physical sciences all over again at a deeper level and thirdly maintain the body and mind in a state of constant alertness until the Soul is trained to acquire knowledge about the Spirit. Afterwards Ibn Sina makes it clear to his students that he began to write when he had completed his acquisition of knowledge including metaphysics. In other words he means that writing a book must be a consequence of achieving this goal.

In the autobiography Ibn Sina describes an educational agenda with which he instructs his students and in this way the autobiography is reminiscent of the first part of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. His method of self-education and manner of questioning his teachers and inquiring about logical and geometrical matters is not only instructive but also exemplifies the Aristotelian way of teaching. Thus aside from the contradictions and exaggerations, the autobiography contains much to instruct the students of Ibn Sina's circle and following generations.

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[39] Al- Qifṭī and Ibn Abī Uṣaibi'a mention twenty-one and Baihaqī emphasizes that there were twenty-two.

[40] Cf. *Rasā'il ixwān aṣ-ṣafā*, vol. IV, p. 42 f.

D. Gurgānj: A new rank and the companionship of the scholars

Ibn Sina must have left Buxārā around 389. If we accept that he was born in 367 (as was discussed above) he would have been twenty-two when he escaped from Buxārā and sought refuge at the court of the Ma'mūnīds in 389. To understand this matter it is important to consider the circumstances which led him to leave the capital city. We will begin with a review of the history of both the Samanid court in Buxārā and the Ma'mūnid court in Xuārazm at the time when Sulṭān Maḥmūd of the Ġaznavid dynasty succeeded his father to the throne.

After the death of Nūḥ II in 387 A. H., his young son Manṣūr succeeded to the throne. He reigned for a period of one year and seven months when, through a conspiracy of his nobles, he was blinded and his brother, 'Abdu'l-Malik II, who was also a child, was put on the throne. He reigned for eight months (389/999-390/1000) when Ilak Xān, Maḥmūd's Turkish ally, took over the power. The official fall of the Samanid dynasty occurred in 390/1000. The last aspirant to the throne, Muntaṣir Ismā'īl ibn Nūḥ, was killed in 395/1005.[41] It is hard to accept that Ibn Sina was still at the court of the Samanids when the last amir was killed. It is more likely that he left the court and Buxārā by the year 390/1000 before the reign of Ilak Xān. Thus, it must have been about 389/999 when Ibn Sina went to Xuārazm.

Before we describe Ibn Sina's journey to Xuārazm it is important to mention that according to the autobiography he finished writing a book in which all the sciences except mathematics were included at the age of twenty-one. This book was written at the request of a certain neighbor. He also wrote another work in twenty volumes as well as a book on the subject of morals and ethics which he dedicated to a learned man, Abū Bakr Barqī Xuārazmī. Apparently no one copied the latter book and Ibn Sina himself did not keep the manuscripts.

The death of Ibn Sina's father and the chaos at the court of the Samanids obliged the young physician to seek refuge at another court. It should also be kept in mind that at this time Maḥmūd of Ġazna had come to power and posed a threat to all the amirs of the time, especially to those who did not share the same religious faith. It is not evident from the contents of the autobiography which year Ibn Sina left Buxārā except for the notice that he was twenty-two. This signifies that he was at the court of the Samanids about four years before he moved to the court of the Ma'mūnid Xuārazmšāh. This was the year that the young amir was blinded and his brother succeeded to the throne and the country suffered a total disaster.

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[41] Mustaufī, *Tārīx*, p. 38 f.

In Xuārazm, however, the Ma'mūnid dynasty had paid tribute to the Samanids in the beginning but then enjoyed a short period of independence between the fall of the Samanids and before being conquered by Maḥmūd. 'Alī ibn Ma'mūn reigned in Xuārazm at this time and through his wise minister, Abu'l-Ḥusain Sahlī, had assembled the greatest men of letters at his court. The other reason for placing Ibn Sina in Xuārazm in 389 A. H. is a statement he makes in the autobiography. According to the account he went to Gurgānj during the reign of 'Alī ibn Ma'mūn. This Xuārazmšāh reigned between 387-390 A. H. Ibn Sina must have arrived at his court a year or at least a few months before his death and therefore must have been there at the beginning or middle of the year 389. In 390 Ma'mūn II[42] succeeded his brother 'Alī ibn Ma'mūn,[43] on the throne and married his brother's wife who was Sulṭān Maḥmūd's sister and appointed Abu'l-Ḥusain Sahlī as his minister.[44] Sahlī, who was a learned man himself, had obviously made it possible for men of letters to assemble at his court. Ibn Sina's statement about him confirms the truth of this: "'Abu'l-Ḥusain al-Sahlī, was a minister, being a man devoted to these sciences."[45] The *Sarguḏašt* confirms that the Ma'mūnid Amir was no other than 'Alī ibn Ma'mūn when Ibn Sina arrived at the court of Ma'mūnids.[46] Ibn Sina is silent about how 'Alī ibn Ma'mūn ended and how his successor took over the throne. Ibn Sina was, however, taken into favor by the new amir and resided in Gurgānj for almost a decade.

In Gurgānj Ibn Sina's educational development reached the third peak. There he was appointed to a new rank[47] and enjoyed the company of the most distinguished learned men of his time, Abū Sahl Masīḥī the physician and philosopher,[48]Abū Raiḥān Bīrunī, the chronologist, historian and astronomer, Abū Naṣr 'Irāq, the mathematician, and Abu'l-Xair Xammār, the physician. The five men of letters lived at the court of Xuārazmšāh until Sulṭān Maḥmūd of Ġazna demanded their presence at

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[42] Baihaqī, *Tārīx-i Baihaqī*, ed. Nafīsī, vol. I, p. 453 ff.; cf. Mu'īn, *Ta'līqāt-i Čahār maqāla*, p. 411 f.; Ibn Abī Uṣaibi'a, *ibid.*, p. 4.

[43] Ibn Abī Uṣaibi'a, *Kitāb 'uyūn al-anbā'*, p. 4; al- Qifṭī, *Axbār*, p. 41.

[44]Abu'l-Ḥusain Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad was the minister of 'Alī ibn Ma'mūn and his brother Abu'l-'Abbās. He escaped from Xuārazm out of fear of Xuārazmšāh in 404 and died in Baġdād in 418. Cf. Mu'in, *ibid.*, p. 414.

[45] Arberry, *ibid.*, p. 13.

[46] Ibn Abī Ulaibi'a, *Kitāb 'uyun*, p. 4; al- Qifī, *Axbār*, p. 41.

[47] Evidently the courtiers were recognized by their clothing and Ibn Sina went clad in a jurisprudent (*faqih*) garb and had a sizeable pension.

[48]Abū Sahl 'Isā ibn Yaḥyā Gurgānī was the greatest physician of the fourth and the fifth centuries after *Ḥijra*. He wrote many books on different subjects of science including medicine. It is also said that he was Ibn Sina's teacher in medicine. Abū Raiḥān Bīrūnī has ascribed twelve books to him. Cf. Nafīsī, *Zindagī*, p. 135.

his court. The manner in which Sulṭān Maḥmūd requested their surrender has been reported variously.

According to the account of *Čahār maqāla*, when the Xuārazmšāh received the letter from Maḥmūd regarding their removal to the court of Maḥmūd, he called the five learned men and showed them the letter, asking their opinion in regard to their attendance at the court of the Ġaznavids. Three of them gave a positive reply to the order[49] whereas Ibn Sina and Abū Sahl Masīḥī, refused to go. The Xuārazmšāh, who was afraid of Maḥmūd on one hand and reluctant to surrender the two learned men to the messenger of Maḥmūd on the other hand, made their escape possible. In this manner *Čahār maqāla* explains the reason for the departure of the two learned men from the court of the Xuārazmšāh. Whether this is true or not is difficult to ascertain as there is not much in the historical sources to support Nižāmī Arūźī's words. Ibn Sina himself gives no details regarding why he left the court of the Ma'mūnīds and simply states, "Then I was constrained to move to Nasā."[50] He employs here the same expression he used at an earlier stage when explaining his escape from Buxārā.

There are, however, two points in Ibn Sina's statement that suggest that he was escaping from grave danger. First he employs the same phrase that he had used for motivating his departure from Buxārā [51] and second he gives some detail about the little towns he passed through to reach Gurgān. If he were not escaping why would he risk his life in the wilderness?

One can ask why Ibn Sina and his companion escaped from Gurgānj about 403 when the decline of the Ma'mūnids did not begin until A. H. 408. Before we survey the accounts of the history books on this matter, it is relevant to say that Sahlī or Suhalī, the minister of Xuārazmšāh who was Ibn Sina's patron, escaped from Xuārazm in 404. This indicates that the circumstances had changed at the court of the Ma'mūnids already about Ibn Sina's departure.

It is also known to us that the Xuārzmšāh, Abu'l-'Abbās Ma'mūn had married Maḥmūd's sister at that time and that he feared Maḥmūd. Also he was about to surrender his land to Maḥmud when he was killed by his nobles. All these accounts signify that the court of the Ma'mūnids was no longer a safe place for men of letters. It is also likely that Sahlī understood this and suggested that Ibn Sina and Abū Sahl Masīḥī, who

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[49] The other account says that Maḥmūd took them with him after having conquered Xuārazm in 408. Cf. Mu'īn, *ibid.*, p. 41.

[50] Arberry, *ibid.*, p. 14; al- Qiftī, *Axbār*, p. 41; Ibn Abī Uṣaibi'a, *Kitāb 'uyūn al-anbā'*, p. 4.

[51] He probably had Sulṭān Maḥmūd in mind, as the Sulṭān called himself *al-ġāzī* and his main target was killing people of other faiths than *Šāfi'ī* and *Ḥanbalī*.

were of another faith than Maḥmūd, seek a new patron for themselves. Most likely this new patron was to be Qābūs who was famous in the domain of literature for his patronage of men of letters. Thus, it makes sense to say that the two great scholars escaped from Xuārazm.

In this context *Čahār maqāla* has its own interpretation which is not quite congruent with that of the historians. According to the latter the prominent men of the Ma'munid court including Abū Xair Xammār and Abū Raiḥān Bīrunī were taken to Ġazna when Maḥmūd conquered Xuārazm in retaliation for the murder of his brother in law, Ma'mūn II, in 408.

The autobiography treats Ibn Sina's stay in Gurgānj very briefly and no names of men of letters are mentioned. It is, however, the history books that inform us about the coexistence of several scholars at the local court of Gurgānj court. Seen in the context of the two parallel accounts of the *Sarguḏašt* and the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* this fact allows us to conclude that Ibn Sina's third stage of spiritual growth reached completion in Gurgānj and that the companionship of certain other scholars contributed to it.

E. Gurgān: The master and the circles of students

In spite of being accompanied by a guide, the two men of letters faced great difficulties in finding their way through the desert. Abū Sahl Masīhī perished in the wilderness and Ibn Sina ended up in Abīward.[52] From there he continued his long journey by way of Ṭūs, Šuqān, Samangān Jājarm[53] with Gurgān as his goal.[54] In Gurgān he was hoping to attend the court of the Zīyārid Amir Qābūs Wušmgīr, entitled Šams ul-Ma'ālī.[55] Nižāmī recounts that in Gurgān Ibn Sina was summoned to the court of Qābūs to visit a sick relative of the ruler. Ibn Sina cured the prince by giving him a psychological treatment. Qābūs was highly impressed by the treatment and took the physician into his favor.[56]

Ibn Sina's own account does not give any details about his sojourn at the court of Qābūs;[57] on the contrary it implies that his visit in Gurgān

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[52] The other accounts say that both reached Abīward from Nasā. In the desert Abū Sahl realized by means of astrology that his death was near but that Ibn Sina would find his way with difficulty. His prediction came true and he was trapped in the desert and lost his life.

[53] Cf. Nafīsī, *ibid.*, p. 425 f.

[54] Cf. Nižāmī 'Arūźī, *ibid.*, p. 86 ff.

[55] The Amir was an enlightened and accomplished man who was well known among scholars not only because of his literary background but also because of his patronage of men of letters.

[56] Cf. Nižāmī 'Arūźī, *ibid.*, p. 89.

[57] Šams ul-Ma'ālī Qābūs ibn Wušmgīr, the ruler of Ṭabaristān, was the fourth Zīyārid king who succeeded his brother in 366 A. H. He was a man of letters and patron of learned

was coincident with the detention of the Amir in a certain fortress where he died.[58] In other words the Amir had died before Ibn Sina had a chance to meet him. Apparently the revolt of the nobility which had lead to Qābūs' imprisonment and death plunged the country into a chaotic situation which forced Ibn Sina to leave Gurgān for Dihistān about 403. There a crucial illness made him return to Gurgān where he met Jūzjānī. At this point the autobiography ends without making clear how much time elapsed between his departure from Gurgān and his return.

The rest of the biographical account of Ibn Sina's life was written by Jūzjānī.[59] The contents of Jūzjānī's words show that in Gurgān Ibn Sina reached his fourth peak just as the birds of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* reached the summit of the mountains. There in Gurgān, instead of being a courtier,[60] he became a master who gave lectures on logic and philosophy. In this regard Jūzjānī states: " used to visit him every day, reading the *Almagest* and listening to him lecture on Logic."[61] Afterwards Jūzjānī mentions that Ibn Sina wrote a number of books and essays including the first part of *al-Qānūn*.

The biography says nothing about the number of students who attended Ibn Sina's discourses. It does, however, mention that a certain patron with an interest in philosophy, Abū Muḥammad Šīrāzī, had bought a house for Ibn Sina in his neighborhood and that Jūzjānī used to meet him there. Ibn Sina's sojourn in Gurgān lasted only about a year. If Jūzjānī's word is to be trusted we can assume that Ibn Sina was very busy in Gurgān writing, teaching and instructing students, in addition to treating people for ailments.

Thus, the period in Gurgān is very important in the context of Ibn Sina's circle of students and disciples. There he appears as a master who instructs his followers and gives lectures and in return they help him to reproduce his knowledge on various subjects. Jūzjānī does not confide to us the names of the other students but other biographers do. Baihaqī, for example, not only gives an account of some of Ibn Sina's students but

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men. Abū Raiḥān Bīrūnī, who had enjoyed the generosity of the king, dedicated a book to him (*Chronology of ancient nations*) about A. D. 1000. Qābūs was detained in a fortress between Gurgān and Astarābād and died there of cold. Cf. Browne, *Literary history of Persia*, vol. II, p. 103 f.

[58] Cf. al-Qifṭī, *Axbār*, p. 41.

[59] Abū 'Ubaid 'Abdu'l-Wāḥid Faqīh Jūzjānī, who joined the circle of Ibn Sina's students in Gurgān in 403 and served his master for twenty-five years, wrote the biography of his master, collected his books and wrote an introduction to *Dāniš-nāma-yi 'Alā'ī*. Cf. Niżāmī'Arūżī, *ibid.*, p. 450 ff; cf. Baihaqī, *ibid.*, p. 93 ff.

[60] According to Bīrūnī, Ibn Sina wrote a treatise and dedicated it to Zarrīn Gīs, the daughter of Qābūs, which indicates that even in Gurgān Ibn Sina had some contact with the court of Ṭabaristān.

[61] Arberry, *Avicenna*, p. 15.

also emphasizes that Jūzjānī was not one of the brightest ones. Jūzjānī was more like a follower of Ibn Sina than a disciple or a student.[62]

Among Ibn Sina's students, Baihaqī mentions al-Filsūf Bahmanyār al-Ḥakīm who was a Zoroastrian and not expert in Arabic (He died in 458),[63] al-Ḥakīm Abū Manṣūr al-Ḥusain ibn Ṭāḥir ibn Zayla, who was also a Zoroastrian, and expert in mathematics and music. (He wrote a commentary on *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqżān* in addition to many other books. He died in 440),[64] as well as Abū 'Abdu'llāh Ma'ṣūmī al-Ḥakīm who was a very famous student of Ibn Sina to whom he dedicated his book on love *'al-'Išq'* Ibn Sina has even said about him "al-Ma'ṣūmī is to me what Aristotle was to Plato"[65] He died in 420 in the massacre of the population of Ray by Sulṭān Maḥmūd.[66] Apart from these very famous names there are many other names that are attributed to students belonging to the circle of Ibn Sina. Nāṣir-i Xusrau relates in his *Safar-nāma* that in Simnān when he sought out the learned men he was told of a man called Master 'Alī Nasā'ī whom he went to see. Nāṣir-i Xusrau found him to be a young man who spoke Persian with a Dailami accent and wore his hair uncovered. He had a group of people about him reading Euclid, while another group read medicine and yet another mathematics. Nāṣir-i Xusrau notes that the master kept saying, "I read this with Avicenna, and I heard this from Avicenna." His object was to show Nāṣir-i Xusrau that he had been a student of Ibn Sina.[67]

The way Nāṣir-i Xusrau describes Nasā'ī's school is reminiscent of Jūzjānī's description of study sessions with Ibn Sina. Nāṣir-i Xusrau's words suggest that Ibn Sina had developed a method of teaching that even after him was very famous. In this context those who wished to receive honor and respect pretended to be related to Ibn Sina by following in his footsteps even when their knowledge was not adequate.

F. Ray: The physician of the soul

After his sojourn in Gurgān Ibn Sina moved to Ray to join the service of Sayyida. Sayyida, the Buyid queen,[68] had borne four sons to Faxr ud-daula. The eldest son, Abī, Ṭālib Rustam Majd ud-daula had succeeded his father, Faxr ud-daula at a very early age and his mother ruled the country

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[62] Cf. Baihaqī, *Tatimma*, p. 94.

[63] Baihaqī, *Tatimma*, p. 91 f; cf. Mu'īn, *Ta'līqāt,* p. 444 ff.

[64] Cf. Baihaqī, *ibid.*, p. 92 f.

[65] Cf. Baihaqī, *ibid.*, p. 95 f.

[66] Ṣafā, *Tārīx-i adabīyāt dar Irān,* vol. I, p. 319.

[67] Cf. Nāṣir-i Xusrau, *Book of Travels,* English trans. Thackston, p. 2.

[68] Šīrīn, daughter of Sipahbad Širwīn, was the powerful Zīyārid queen who reigned after the death of her husband Faxr ud-daula.

in his name for thirty-three years. When Ibn Sina arrived at Ray, he found Majd ud-daula overcome by a black bile disease (melancholy) which he treated.[69]

At Ray Ibn Sina composed *Kitāb al-ma'ād* the (Book of the Return). He stayed there until Šams ud-daula, the second son of Sayyida, invaded Ray, following the slaying of Hilāl ibn Badr Ḥasanawaya and the rout of the Baġdād army in 405/1015. Thereafter Ibn Sina decided to go to Hamadān to enter the service of Šams ud-daula, the younger son of Sayyida.

G. Hamadān: The head of society

Ibn Sina apparently left Ray in 406/1016 and went to Qazwīn, intending to proceed to Hamadān to meet Šams ud-daula who had a serious stomach ailment (colic). In Hamadān Ibn Sina treated the Amir for forty days until he was cured and as a result received many gifts. Moreover, he became one of the Amir's intimates and was appointed minister on the occasion of Šams ud-daula return from a battle with 'Annāz' army in Qirmisīn (Kirmānšāh).

Ibn Sina does not seem to have been all that successful in the office of the Amir and Jūzjānī reports that the army conspired against him. They accused him of having withheld their wages and plundered his house. They even demanded that the Amir should put him in jail. They went even further and asked the Amir to put him to death. According to Jūzjānī, Ibn Sina retired from his ministerial position and concealed himself for forty days till the prince was seized by another attack of colic. The skilled physician returned to the court, cured the Amir and was reinstated as minister.

In Hamadān Ibn Sina reached his sixth spiritual peak. There, during a period of seven years (406-413), he acted as vizier and involved himself in politics during the day and led his circle of students at night. According to the biography, students would gather at his house every night and they would take turns at reading *aš-Šifā* and *al-Qānūn*. Jūzjānī also emphasizes the fact that "studying was done by night, because during the day his attendance upon the Amir left him (Ibn Sina) no spare time."[70]

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[69] Nižāmī Arūżī in *Čāhār maqāla* tells a story about a Buyid prince who suffered from melancholy. He imagined himself to be a bull and asked for a butcher to slaughter him. Ibn Sina, in the guise of a butcher, applied his treatments to the prince. It is likely that the Buyid prince and Majd ud-daula represents the same person. Cf. Mu'īn, *Ta'līqāt*, p. 92.

[70] Arberry, *Avicenna*, p. 1.

Baihaqī supports Jūzjānī's statement in this context and gives more details about the assemblies of the students of Ibn Sina. According to him, at these gatherings Abū 'Ubaid read from *aš-Šifā* and Ma'ṣumī took up *al-Qānūn* (the Canon of Medicine) while Ibn Zayla read in his turn from *al-Išārāt* and Bahmanyār from *al-Ḥāṣil wa'l-maḥṣūl*.[71] Niżāmī Arūźī, who is likely to have been inspired by the account of Jūzjānī, gives even more details regarding Ibn Sina's life as a master and a vizier. He also likens Ibn Sina to Aristotle who was Alexander's vizier. Moreover, he depicts how Ibn Sina would initiate and instruct several students before daybreak.[72]

In 412 A. H., Šams ud-daula died and his son, Samā' ud-daula succeeded him. He asked Ibn Sina to stay on as vizier but Ibn Sina refused his request. He decided to go to Iṣfahān and enjoy the attendance upon 'Alā' ud-daula Kākūya.[73] Ibn Sina, who instructs his associates in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* on how to hide themselves when it is necessary, followed the same principle and concealed himself while at the same time he corresponded in secret with the court of 'Alā' ud-daula.[74] According to the account of the biography, he completed some parts of his *Kitāb aš-šifā* while in hiding and Jūzjānī reports that he wrote fifty pages every day.[75] Then he commenced writing a book on logic, when Tāj ul-Mulk found his hiding place and arrested him. Ibn Sina was detained in the fortress of Fardajān for four months, and it is said that he wrote the *Ḥayy ibn Yaqżān*, the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* [76] and the *Kitāb al-hidāya* there. Alā' ud-daula attacked Hamadān and defeated Tāj ul-Mulk. Despite being in flight, Tāj ul-Mulk passed by the fortress of Fardajān to get Ibn Sina and bring him to Hamadān. He was accommodated in a certain house where he composed the logic of *aš-Šifā* while waiting for the right time to escape to Iṣfahān. At last he went to Iṣfahān disguised in Ṣūfī garb together with his brother, his disciple Jūzjānī and two slaves.

H. Iṣfahān: The master of masters

Ibn Sina arrived in Iṣfahān around 414/1023. There he stayed for the rest of his life and wrote many books which cover a wide range of topics. His encyclopedic work, the *Kitāb šifā an-nafs* and his Book of Logic (*Manṭiq)*

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[71] Cf. Baihaqī, *Tatimma*, p. 49.

[72] Mu'īn, *Ta'līqāt*, p. 92 f.

[73] 'Alā' ud-daula Ḥusām ud-dīn Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Dušman Zīyār known as Ibn Kākūya reigned in Iṣfahān from 398-433. He was Sayyida's cousin. That was why he was called Kākūya as Kākū means uncle in the Dailami dialect.

[74] Cf. Arberry, *Avicenna*, p. 18; cf. Gohlman, *The life of Ibn Sina*, p. 62 f.

[75] Gohlman, *The life*, p. 58 f.

[76] Cf. Baihaqī, *Tatimma*, p. 50.

were finished there. Besides, he made summaries of many books on Greek philosophy and wrote many other books including *Manṭiq al-mašriqīya*. It is said that during this period he accompanied the ruler on his numerous journeys and wrote or dictated his books when he was on horseback or camel. Other regular activities during these years included leading the gathering of his students and taking part in the weekly Friday night debate organized by the Amir.

The life Ibn Sina led in Iṣfahān falls into two periods. During the first six years he had relative peace of mind until 420 when Sayyida died in Ray and Maḥmūd attacked Ray. Maḥmūd of Ġazna accused Majd ud-daula of being a Qarmaṭī heretic, took his treasures, burned the libraries, and killed a large number of the population for sharing the same faith as their amir. Iṣfahān was threatened but as Maḥmūd himself died in 420 the city was not attacked until his son Mas'ūd invaded Iṣfahān between 420-421. He burned the city and killed thousands of people. It was in this attack that once again Ibn Sina's house was plundered and his fortune, including his books, was taken to Ġazna although he himself escaped capture.

After 421 'Alā' ud-daula returned to power and Ibn Sina became even more intimate with him. "The Amir appointed every Friday night a meeting for learned discussion before him to be attended by all the scholars according to their various degrees, the Master Abū 'Alī among them; in these gatherings he proved himself quite supreme and unrivalled in every branch of learning."[77] In the astronomical section at the end of that work he added things which had never been discovered before. He also introduced some new examples into Euclid and in the same manner enlarged the arithmetic with a number of excellent refinements, and discussed problems of music which the ancient Greek had neglected.

In Iṣfahān he also improved his knowledge of philology by devoting three years of his life to the study of his subject. He also wrote a book on the subject entitled *Lisān al-'Arab*. Meanwhile he accompanied the Amir in battle until his last days.

The Amir, 'Alā' ud-daula Kākūya, who probably did not know Arabic, asked him to write a book on the subject of the natural sciences in Persian so that he could have a better comprehension of the sciences. Ibn Sina wrote his encyclopedic *Dāniš-nāma*[78] and dedicated the book to him and entitled it *Dāniš-nāma-yi 'Alā'ī*. He also wrote the book *Rag-šināsī* in

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[77] Arberry, *Avicenna*, p. 18 f.

[78] According to the introduction of the book it was meant to include treatises on the subjects of logic, natural sciences, astrology, music and metaphysics. Ibn Sina, however, never wrote the chapters on logic, divine and natural sciences. The rest of the book (astrology, geometry, arithmetic and music) was completed by Jūzjānī. Cf. Ibn Abī Uṣaibi'a, *Kitāb 'uyūn*, p. 19.

Persian. Ibn Sina spent the last seven years of his productive, restless life (421-428) in this manner. There in Iṣfahān he reached the seventh and last peak of his spiritual life and died in 428 in Hamadān on one of the Amir's battlefields. In other words his life was a battlefield from the beginning to the end and he did not die in his house in Iṣfahān, but in Hamadān. He lived like a bird and died like a bird; he never married and settled in a nest although he was taken into favor by several amirs. He left them as soon as he recognized that it was 'necessary' to move on as he instructed his students in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. Ibn Sina never explains to his audience or readers in what the 'necessary' consists nor what urged him to leave. He surely knew the unspecified reason, and that is understandable from the contents of his autobiography: to break with the old attachments and not to be possessed by possessions. Leading a free life allowed him constantly to elevate his state of being. Periodically he would leave everything behind in order to advance to a new stage. At least this is the account of his life as it is presented in his autobiography.

Thus he presents his physical life as a series of seven journeys which at the same time represents seven stages of intellectual and spiritual attainment, stages in the quest for truth. In the following chapter we will see how the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* takes up the same theme on a spiritual level. In the *Risāla-yi sarguḏašt* it is never a openly expressed that the text is meant to serve as a guideline for seekers of the truth as philosophers; in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* this is much more evident.

CHAPTER II

The *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*

The attribution of the authorship of the *Risālat ut-ṭair* to Ibn Sina is certain, not only because of its style but also because of the statement made by Jūzjānī, Ibn Sina's pupil, in his biography of Ibn Sina.[1] Further proof that Ibn Sina is the author of this text comes from Suhrawardī's translation of the Epistle. Although many scholars after Suhrawardī, including his disciple Šahrazūrī, mention the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* as one of Suhrawardī's works, Suhrawardī himself states at the beginning of this work that it is a translation of Ibn Sina's Epistle.[2] It is necessary to draw attention to the point that Ibn Sina's works, especially his allegorical ones, were a great source of inspiration to Suhrawardī. Suhrawardī was influenced by Ibn Sina's style of writing and employed the style as a vessel to contain his own *Išrāqī* philosophy.

Accordingly, Suhrawardī's interest in Ibn Sina's works, as it is manifested in practice and mentioned in his works, is a reliable indication that the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* should be counted among the works of Ibn Sina and that it, like *Ḥayy ibn Yaqżān*, inspired Suhrawardī to a certain extent. In other words he not only translated the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* into Persian, the language in which he expressed his own allegorical works, but he also wrote another epistle in the same manner. Beside the two very early Persian translations of the Epistle by the two prominent scholars, Axsīkaṭī and Suhrawardī, the majority of the extant manuscripts of the Epistle also testify to the authorship of Ibn Sina. Finally the statement by Ḥājjī Xalīfa[3] regarding the authorship of Ibn Sina leaves no doubt that the *Risāla* was written by him.

When and where it was composed is, however, a question that we cannot yet answer with absolute certainty. Ibn Sina led a life of constant journey, but despite this, historical evidence leads us to consider a certain period around 412-414 A. H. when he was imprisoned in the fortress of Fardajān. According to various sources it was there that he wrote his *Ḥayy ibn Yaqżān*, a tract on colic (*Risāla fi'l-qūlanj*) and the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. It is

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[1] Ibn Abī Uṣaibi'a in *'Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭṭibā'* paraphrased this statement in the following words: "The Epistle of the bird, an allegorical composition in which he described how he reached the knowledge of Truth." Cf. *'Uyūn*, ed. A. Müller, vol. II, p. 19.

[2] Cf. Spies and Khatak, *Three Treatises on Mysticism*, p. 9.

[3] Cf. Ḥājjī Xalīfa, *Kašf*, vol. III, p. 418.

not, however, proven that the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* was written in the fortress. According to the internal evidence of the text which will be examined in the chapter on *al-Išārāt wa't-tanbīhāt* and its similarity to the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*, the *Risāla* could have been written during a later period of Ibn Sina's life.

The concern of the present chapter is to describe the extant and available manuscripts of Ibn Sina's *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*, determine their age, interdependence and relationship to the archetype of the text on the basis of external and internal criteria. To reach this goal I first introduce the extant Mss. of the *Risāla.* Then, I discuss twenty-four Mss., which I have seen. The next step is to present the Mss. which I chose for use in this study. I also discuss the printed editions of the Epistle in Arabic and the printed translations of the Epistle in European languages. I also introduce and describe the available manuscripts of the Persian translation of the Epistle. I define the extant manuscripts of the Persian and Arabic commentaries made on the Epistle. Finally, the transmission of the text of the *Risāla* is discussed. In this section my intention is to illustrate the relationship of the Mss. to the archetype and present different traditions of the reading of the *Risāla.*

A. Description of the manuscripts of Ibn Sina's *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*

There are about fifty-seven extant manuscripts of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair,* namely Mss. Beirut St. Joseph 410(9)[4] 978(28);[5] Cairo Taimūrīya 290, Dār al-kutub 2228v, 2834v, Rashid 811(2);[6] Manchester 410(9);[7] London British Museum 978(26),(28): *Codices Arabici,* p. 450; Tübingen 89(31);[8] India Āṣifīya II, 1718, Rāmpūr III, 777;[9] Tehran Majlis, 1226, 610(4): I'tiṣāmī, *Fihrist-i kitābxāna-yi majlis-i šūrā-yi millī*, vol. II, p. 364, 1805, 5283(2), 1918(21): Ḥā'irī, *Fihrist-i kitābxāna-yi majlis-i šūrā-yi millī*, vol. V, p. 411, 4547, Kitābxāna-yi markazī 1147(7): Dānišpažūh, *Fihrist-i kitābxāna-yi ihdā'ī-i āqā-yi Sayyid Muḥammad Miškāt bi dānišgāh-i Tihrān*, vol. III, part 4, p. 2437. 1149(15): Dānišpažūh, *Fihrist*, vol. III, part 4, p. 2437, 1074(7): Dānišpažūh, *ibid.*, vol. III, p. 298 f. 2618(2): Dānišpažūh, *Fihrist-i kitābxāna-yi markazī-yi*

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[4] Cf. Anawati, *Mu'allafāt, Ibn Sīnā*, p. 285.

[5] Cf. Mahdawī, *Fihrist-i muṣannafāt-i Ibn Sīnā* (Bibliography of the works of Ibn Sina), No. 206, p. 177.

[6] Cf. Anawati, *Mu'allafāt,* p. 285.

[7] Cf. Mahdawī, *Fihrist,* p. 177.

[8] Cf. Anawati, *Mu'allafāt*, p. 285.

[9] Cf. Mahdawī, *ibid.*, p. 178; cf. Anawati, *Mu'allafāt,* p. 285.

dānišgāh-i Tihrān, vol. IX, p. 1482 f. Kitābxāna-yi Malik, 2001(9), 2005(4), 2012(6), 2017(6),[10] 4655, 4651, 4638, 4645; Mašhad Āstān quds, 11083,[11] 1074(6);[12] Leiden, 1464(10), De Jong and De Goeje, *Catalogus,* vol. III, Leiden, 1865, pp. 324f, 329, 332.2144: De Jong and De Goeje, *Catalogus,* vol. IV, Leiden, 1866, p. 313, 354. 2140(4);[13] Istanbul Üniversite, 1458(72): Anawati, *Mu'allafāt,* p. 286. 9658, 4755(12), Ahmet III, 3268(2): Mahdawī, *Fihrist,* p. 178; Anawati, *Mu'allafāt*, p. 284. 3447(74): *Topkapī Sarayī Müzesi Kütüphanesi Arapça Yazmalar Kataloğu*, C. III, No. 4680-7487, Istanbul, 1966. p. 620; Anawati, *Mu'allafāt,* p. 284, Ayasofya 3555: Anawati, *Mu'allafāt*, p. 284. 4429: Anawati, *Mu'allafāt*, p. 285. 4849(17): Mahdawī, *Fihrist*, p. 178. 4829(38): Anawati, *Mu'allafāt,* p. 285, 4853(21): Mahdawī, *Fihrist*, p. 178; Anawati, *Mu'allafāt*, p. 285. 4859, 2456(3), Hamidiye, 1448(27),(39), Esad Efendi, 1234,[14] 1239,[15] Rageb 1461(11),[16] Nuruosmaniye 3427(6)[17] 4894(79): Mahdawī, *Fihrist*, p. 177 Köprülü, 1605(1): Anawati, *Mu'allafāt,* p. 286; Afikar, *Fihrist maxṭūṭāt maktaba Köprülü*, vol. II, Istanbul, 1986/1406, p. 332, 1589(37): Mahdawī, *Fihrist*, p. 177, Revan 2042(22): Mahdawī, *Fihrist*, p. 177; Anawati, *Mu'allafāt,* p. 285, Veli 3263(14));[18] a private collection in Turkey (Yildiz Hususi) 889(13).[19] Of these fifty-seven Mss. I have seen twenty-four that are described below:

1. Mss. Topkapī Sarayī Ahmet III 3268(2),(3): These manuscripts are part of a collection volume (*Majmū'a*) which is in good condition despite being very old. The collection comprises seven tracts, and the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* is the second (3268 (2)) and the Arabic commentary is the third (3268 (3)) in order. The collection has a cover of old brown leather. The title page has been impressed by the stamp of the donor of the collection. The collection is complete and includes 110 folios. The size of paper is 33 cm. by 24 cm. (in-quarto). The written surface is 22 cm. by 16 cm.

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[10] Cf. Mahdawī, *Fihrist*, p. 178.

[11] Cf. Āṣif Fikrat, *An Alphabetical Hand-List of the Manuscripts in the Astan Quds Razavi Central Library*; no: 13, p. 398.

[12] Cf. Mahdawī, *ibid.*, p. 178; De Jong and De Goeje, *Catalogus Codicum Orientalium*, vol. III, p. 324 f, 329, 333. Leiden, 1865.

[13] Cf. Anawati, *Mu'allafāt*, p. 286.

[14] Cf. Mahdawī, *ibid.*, p. 178; cf. Anawati, *ibid.*, p. 284

[15] Cf. Anawati, *Mu'allafāt,* p. 284.

[16] Cf. Mahdawī, *ibid.*, p. 177.

[17] Cf. Anawati, *Mu'allafāt*, p. 286. In this collection vol. the *Risāla* is entitled *Fī jamā'at al-ilāhīya.*

[18] Cf. Anawati, *ibid.*, p. 286.

[19] Cf. Anawati, *ibid.*, p. 286.

and there are 21 lines to a page.[20] The Epistle is found on ff. 24b-26a. The script is in clear *nasx*, written on oriental paper with oriental binding. The colophon, found on the last folio of the collection, testifies that the collection was copied by Muḥammad ibn 'Isā ibn 'Alī ibn Hayyāj aṭ-Ṭabīb, and the date of completion is given as ḌI'l-ḥijja 580 A. H.[21] The Ms. (3268(2)) has catchwords and begins with "in the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful" followed by the title of the Epistle: *Risāla marmūẓahu lahu fī waṣfa yuṣalahī ila'l-'ilm al-Ḥaqq wa hīya Risālat aṭ-ṭair.* The collection is vocalized with frequent diacritical marks and vowel signs. These Mss. are called (A1, A2), in English and أ١،٢ in Arabic in the present study.

In my text edition I will use these manuscripts as the basic text of the *Risāla*. The main reason for choosing these Mss. .is that they are the oldest of the manuscripts of the *Risāla*, as is attested by the colophon. Further reasons are clarity of script, the presence of the date and the colophon.

2. Ms. Istanbul Üniversite 4755(12):[22] This manuscript constitutes a large collection with 625 folios of 16 cm. by 12 cm.; 15 lines to the page, bound in oriental binding of dark brown leather. The collection is written in a bold *nasx* script with indication of diacritical marks and vowel signs. In the margin of most tracts, including the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*, a few glosses and notes are written. Each tract has a heading, which is written in larger characters. The date of completion is 588 A. H.[23]

3. Ms. Leiden 1464(10): According to *Cod. or. cat.* III, p. 329 *ad God.* 1020(10) of Leiden, the manuscript is very old and kept in a collection which comprises 13 tracts, with the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* on ff. 78v, 79v. Jacop Forget, who has published the part of the collection containing *the Points and the remarks,* refers to a memorandum written in the margin of the last page of the collection and concludes that it was bought by Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad in 407 A. H. This date throws doubt on the authenticity of the statement, because Ibn Sina himself died in 428 A. H. and the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* is supposed to have been

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[20] According to Anawati it is 35,5 cm. by 23 cm. and 24 cm. by 15,5 cm; cf. Anawati, *Mu'allafāt,* p. 286.

[21] Mahdawī gives the date 586 A. H. which must be a wrong date. Cf. Mahdawī, *ibid.*, p. 330; Anawati prior to Mahdawī gives the same wrong date. Cf. Anawati, *ibid.*, p. 285.

[22] Mahdawī has two different numbers for the order of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*, on page 335 the *Risāla* is 13th in order and on page 177 is 12th.

[23] This date is agreed upon by the two major bibliographers of Ibn Sina: Mahdawī, *Fihrist,* p. 335, also Anawati, *Mu'allafāt*, p. 114.

composed between 412-428 A. H.[24] Another reason for not trusting the authenticity of this statement regarding the date of possession is a note on folio 65 which mentions Ibn Sina's name as the one who has died and may peace be upon him now. It is also interesting to note that *al-Išārāt wa't-tanbīhāt* is supposed to have been one of Ibn Sina's last works which was composed about 427-8. According to Mahdawī, who has seen the collection, the type of paper and the style of writing cannot be older than the seventh century.[25] In this collection the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* is called *Kitāb aš-šabakat wa'ṭ- ṭair.*

4. Ms. Leiden 2144 (Cod. 177(5) Gol.): A microfilm of this manuscript, which constitutes tract number. five (the text of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*) is kept in the central library of Tehran University (*Kitābxāna-yi markazī*). It shows that the collection, especially the manuscript, is in excellent condition, it is complete and the *Risāla* appears on ff. 95a-98b. The manuscript has a format of 16 cm. by 8 cm. with a written surface of 12 cm. by 4 cm., 21 lines to the page. The manuscript was neatly written in *nasx* handwriting in a very slender column marked by the characteristic features of diacritical marking and signed vowels. It is rubricated with larger characters and on f. 96 a marginal note by a later hand is shown. The colophon of the manuscript fails to mention the name of the copyist and the date of completion. However, in the underlined colophon of the collection there is a kind of reference to the name of the copyist, although he is modest enough not to reveal his name: He refers to himself only as *al-'Abd al-ża'īf al-rājī ilā raḥmat ar-rab,* but he is very precise about the date of completion: Muḥaram 721 A. H.

5. Ms. Tehran Kitābxāna-yi markazī 1147(7): This manuscript is part of a collection, which is defective and includes 143 folios. The folios are bound in order, except for folio 78a, which has been detached. The *Risāla* is on ff. 78b-81a, 7th in order, with glosses and marginal notes. The collection has a very old black oriental cover and contains oriental paper (Samarqandī). It is in fair condition; worm-eaten, holed and once mended, the physical damage having affected the marginal part of the paper and some phrases, while the rest of the collection is readable.

On the folios preceding the title page two verses are written with a later hand in a tiny cursive *nasta'līq*, the page is stamped variously. One memorandum by an owner mentions that he is Šaix Taqī ibn Šaix 'Alī Šarīf al-Lāhījānī. On the title page is a statement which indicates that the collection changed hands and came into the ownership of Sayyid

[24] Cf. De Jong and De Goeje, *Catalogue,* III, p. 324 ff. No. 1464.

[25] Cf. Mahdawī, *Fihrist*, p. 34.

Muḥmmad Miškāt (the donor of the collection to Tehran University); dated 1374 A. H. The title page has been scribbled by the same hand (Miškāt) and gives a table of contents consisting of fourteen tracts. The collection has a format of 19 cm. by 10 cm. (in-16 *ruq'ī*) with a written surface of 11 cm. by 5 cm., 17 lines to the page, written in clear, plain *nasx* and *nasta'līq* by an unknown scribe, who in the colophon (on f. 81a) modestly expresses shame for his scribbling and other deeds. Because of this he has no intention of revealing his name. In the colophon there is no clue indicating the date of copying but there are reasons to believe that the collection was written before 948 A. H. It can be stated that the first *Risāla* of the collection is written by Jiyāt Daštakī d. 948 A. H. and the scribe wishes him a long life (in the margin of f. 49, tract number. 3). There is another date, 1042, inscribed by al-Lāhījānī which indicates the date it came into his possession. Finally, the collection is written by one hand in different scripts. If the tract number.13 had been complete, perhaps we could have obtained more information regarding the scribe and the date of copying.

6. Ms. Istanbul Köprülü 1605(1): This manuscript, is the first part of a collection, which comprises eight tracts written by various authors. Five epistles belong to Ibn Sina, namely *Ḥayy ibn Yaqżān, Kitāb taqāsīn al-ḥikma, Risāla fi'l-muxāṭibāt al-arwāḥ, Risāla fī bayān al-ḥāl an-nafs* and *Risāla fi'l-ḥikāyāt al-ḥāl* (the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*).[26] The collection comprises 77 folios, the *Risāla* appears on ff. 1b-3b. It has oriental paper about 25 cm. by 18 cm. in size. The written surface is about 20 cm. by 13 cm., 19 lines per page. It is copied in clear *nasx*, in one hand. According to the evidence of the colophon on f. 75 and the scribe was: al-'Abd Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusain al-Ja'farī al-Ma'rūf bi Ibn Abī Quba', who completed the task in Ṣafar 700 A. H.[27]

7. Ms. Topkapī Sarayī Ahmet III 3447(73): This manuscript comprises 83 tracts, all attributed to Ibn Sina (*Majmū'at ar-rasā'il Ibn Sīnā)*, and *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* entitled *Risālat uṭ-ṭuyūr*, is number. 73. The collection counts 740 folios, the *Risālat* covers ff. 599b-602a, the size of the paper is 34 cm. by 21,5 cm. the written surface is 12 cm. with 17 lines

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[26] In the old catalogue of Köprülü, the Ms. is entitled as *Risāla fī ḥikāyat al-ḥāl.* Cf. *Konstantinobel oriental bibliotek katalog över oriental Mss.*, vols. 1-39, Köprülü, p. 127, (1882-1894).

[27] Cf. Ḥājjī Xalīfa, *Kašf,* p. 877; Istanbul, Köprülü, *Sesen catalogue of Manuscripts in Köprülü*, vol. II p. 332 f; Mahdawī, *Fihrist-i nusxahā-yi muṣannafāt-i Ibn Sīnā*, p. 177.

to the page, written in *ta'līq* script. The copyist is unknown, the date of completion is 866 A. H. (1462).[28]

8. Ms. Istanbul Köprülü 1589(43): The collection volume which contains Ms. 1589(43) comprises 41 tracts and *dīwāns* written in the main field and 63 in the marginal space (*hāmiš*). A microfilm of this collection is preserved in the library of Tehran University under reference number. 462.

The collection consists of 433 folios, the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* occupies ff. 291b-292b in the marginal space (*hāmiš*). The size of the paper is 32,4 cm. by 17,5; the written surface in the main part is about 22 cm. by 11 cm., 35-37 lines to the page. The measurements of the Mss. which appear in the margin differ from those of the main part.

Like the other folios in the collection in which the marginal space is filled, the written surface of the margin is about 30 cm. by 15 cm. with 83 lines per page. The collection is written both in a clear *nasx* and bold Turkish *ta'līq*; the manuscript is copied in Turkish *ta'līq* handwriting with no diacritical marks or vowel signs. The collection has catchwords and entries with illumination and headings. It has also ruled marginal and interlinear lines. The collection, which is in good condition, has an oriental leather binding. The colophon indicates that the copying of the last part of the collection (*Dīwān-i Kamāl ud-dīn al-Qāšānī*) was completed in Ṣafar 811 A. H.

Regarding the date of completion of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* nothing is mentioned at the end of the *Risāla*, but from the colophon of tract number 38, written on folio 286a (6 folios before the *Risāla*), one can conclude that the scribe finished copying the manuscript on ḌI'l-ḥijja 753 A. H. According to Anawati the scribe is Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusain al-Ja'farī al-ma'rūf bi Abī Quba'.[29]

9. Ms. Tehran Kitābxāna-yi markazī 1074(7): The manuscript, is part of a collection possessed previously by Miškāt. The collection contains the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* along with eighteen philosophical and medical tracts; the Epistle is the seventh in order.

The collection is defective and lacks seven tracts, which are mentioned on the title page; moreover, f. 232b is incomplete with some words missing. Otherwise the collection counts 232 folios of 20 cm. by 10,5 cm.; the written surface is 14 cm. by 5,5, in a single column of 18 lines to

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[28] Cf. *Topkapī Sarayī Müzesi Kütüphanesi Arapça Yazmalar Kataloğu*, C. III, No. 4680-7487, p. 618, no. 6648.

[29] Cf. *Istanbul, Köprülü, Sesen catalogue of Mss. in Köprülü*, vol. II, p. 254-277; *Nawādir al-maxṭūṭāt*, vol. I: 106; Ḥājjī Xalīfa, *Kašf*, p. 877; Brockelmann, 1: 819, no. 44.

the page, no border. Written on European paper in very fine, tiny *ta'līq* and *nasta'līq* (in the case of tract no. 9) and the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* occupies ff. 124a-127a. The collection has oriental red leather binding. No diacritical marks and vowel signs are inscribed and even in many cases the dots are missing. On the title page (f. 1b) after mentioning *Tafsīr ibn Zaila*, tract number 17, eight more *unwāns* of various tracts are written, but only one of them (*Dilalat at-Turāt 'a lā nabuwwat an-nabī*) exists in the collection and the seven other epistles are not included. Instead, there is a white page. The collection is dated Rajab 1071 A. H by an unknown scribe.[30]

10. Ms. Tehran Kitābxāna-yi markazī 1149(15): The manuscript is part of a large collection including 77 tracts; the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* is 15th. This collection is kept at the central library in Tehran and is in excellent condition. It counts 401 folios, the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* occurs on ff. 46b-47a; it is 31 cm. by 21 cm. with a written surface of 23 cm. by 13 cm. 31 lines to the page. The collection is written on thick Samarqandī paper and is bound in an oriental binding of brown leather (in *raḥlī* format). On the first folio six memoranda appear four of which indicate a date of acquisition. The same folio bears the autographs of different owners with the impressions of their seals. Although a few words on this folio are obliterated, the statements and seals are not blurred. This collection is written in one hand, mostly in clear Turkish *ta'līq* except for the tracts no. 1, 18, 35, 36; the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair,* which appears on folios 46b-47a, is written in Turkish *ta'līq*. It does not contain any marginal notes, glosses or diacritical marks. It does not even have a title.

The last folio of the collection does not give any precise indication as to the name of the scribe or the date of completion. However the first folio provides a clue to the age of the collection. Four notes written on top of the page attest that the present collection changed owner. The oldest of the four tells us that the collection no. 1149 passed into the possession of Muṣṭafā ibn 'Abd'ullāh ibn Ilās ibn Šaix Muḥammad in the year 962 A. H. The later note mentions the date 1041 A.H. when Xalīfa Sulṭān owned the collection. The third note demonstrates the ownership of Muḥammad Ṭāhir Pizišk al-Tafrīšī in 1132 A. H. The last memorandum on this page belongs to Muḥammad Ibrāhīm al-Qazwīnī in 1245 A. H. On the last folio of the collection there is a memorandum scribbled in *nasx* handwriting indicating that the collection came into the hand of Muḥammad Miškāt, who donated it to the central library of Tehran University on the evening of 10th of Jamādī I in 1374.

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[30] The Ms. is recorded by Mahdawī. Cf. Mahdawī, *Fihrist*, pp. 177, 366.

11. Ms. Tehran Majlis 1918(21): This manuscript is part of a collection which consists of 24 tracts of which the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* is the 21st. This collection comprises 256 folios; the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* occurs on ff. 213-219. The format of the collection is (in-16 *ruq'ī*) which means 18 cm. by 11 cm. The written surface and script vary in the collection. The Ms. 1918(21) contains 17 lines per page, written on glazed creme oriental paper; it is bound in oriental brown leather and in excellent condition. Preceding the text of the first tract, on two front pages, there is a table of contents which shows two different dates, 886 and 898 A. H. These two pages are followed by a third which bears the autographs of various owners with no date of possession. One or two blurred seals are impressed on the page, some words are obliterated; there are a few verses and on top of the page the names of the 12 lunar months are inscribed. The memoranda are all written by different hands.

This Ms. is written in *ta'līq* handwriting, with indication of diacritical marks, frequently added vowel signs, and glosses in the margin. The colophon of the Ms. bears witness to the date of completion: 897 A. H; it is, however, the colophon of the following tract (a Persian translation of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*) which reveals the name of the scribe: al-Ġanī Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr al-Qanāt Šīrāzī.[31]

12. Ms. Ayasofya 4853(24): The manuscript is one of a collection of tracts compiled under this reference number. It contains 28 treatises all in Arabic, except for the last one, which is in Persian. The collection is complete and is in good condition; it has oriental binding and oriental paper. It counts 264 folios of 11,5 cm. by 16 cm. The collection commences with a folio, which is impressed by two seals. On this folio appears a table of contents which see Ms. to be scribbled by the same hand which has copied the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*, which occurs on ff. 96b-99b. This Epistle has a different script and shows a different written surface of 12 cm. by 7,5 cm., 21 lines to page with 10 words in each line. Preceding the scribbled title page is a page on which an excellent table of contents appears with rolled margin and underlined titles. This table of contents shows a list of 28 tracts all of which are ascribed to Ibn Sina. The scribbled title page fails to state all the titles of the tracts contained in the manuscript as it mentions the names of only 23 epistles.

This Ms. is written in very clear *nasx* with vocalization and orthographic signs, having marginal notes and glosses. The colophon is silent about both the date of completion and the name of the scribe. Both the catalogue of Ayasofya's Mss. and bibliographers of Ibn Sina's works

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[31] For further information see Mahdawī, *Fihrist*, p. 177 f.; Anawati, *ibid.*, p. 284-287; Ḥā'irī, *Fihrist,* vol. V, p. 410.

viz. Mahdawī and Anawati record that the collection belongs to the seventh century.[32]

13. Ms. Ayasofya 4849(20): This is a very old manuscript in a collection containing Ibn Sina's tracts. It is in good condition with oriental binding of black leather. The collection comprises 42 philosophical and medical tracts, copied on Samarqandī paper. The last folio of the collection shows an excellent table of contents with reference to the page numbers of the tracts. The list of tracts, located on f. 172, is sealed by an almond-shaped seal. It is possible that this page was added to the collection when it was being bound, or it was blank in the beginning and the writing was added by a later hand. The reason for this is to complement the table of contents on the first folio which has been obliterated in some places. This page is covered by handwriting which seems. to be different from that of the last folio. The obliterated title page is followed by the treatise on the life of Ibn Sina, on top of the first page of which the reference number of the collection is written and the seal of Ayasofya has been stamped next to it.

This collection, which counts 180 folios of 16 cm., by 11,5 cm. is written by one hand in *nasx* script. The folios have a written surface of 12 cm. by 7,5 cm., 21 lines with 10 words to the page. The Mss. including *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* have marginal notes and glosses which seem to be written by a later hand especially on ff. 80a and 81b. Ff. 79b-82a contain the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. The collection has *abjad* numbers and pages are counted ten by ten. The date of completion is 697 A. H.

14. Ms. Ayasofya 4429(38): The Ms. is part of a large collection comprising 41 tracts. It is written in *nasx* on folios of 36 cm. by 25cm., with a written surface of 24 cm. by 15 cm. 35 lines with 17 words to page. The *Risāla* is found on ff. 163b-164, recorded as a ninth century tract.[33]

15. Ms. Tehran Kitābxāna-yi markazī 2618(2): The Ms. is the second tract of a defective collection in which tract number. 22, which is supposed to be written in *nasta'līq* handwriting, is missing. The collection counts 145 folios, with the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* on ff. 36-37. The collection is written on Sipāhānī paper of 28 cm. by 17 cm with a written surface of 22 cm. by 11,5 cm., 23 lines to page. The bold and clear *nasta'līq* script in which the collection is written is typical for the 11-12 century. A memorandum on the front page states a date of possession: 26th of Ḏi'l-ḥijja 1274 A. H. It has European binding of brown. The title page has

[32] Cf. Anawati, *ibid.*, p. 285; Mahdawī, *Fihrist*, p. 337.

[33] Cf. Anawati, *ibid.*, p. 285.

been tabulated with golden and blue lines, which contains the list of tracts compiled in the collection. It is also important to mention that each tract has a heading. The *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* is called: *Risāla marmūza li'l-ḥakīm ar-rabānī Abī 'Alī al-ḥusain ibn 'Abdu'llāh fī waṣf-i tawaṣuluhu il'l-'ilm al-ḥaqq wa hya risālat aš-šabakat w'ṭ-ṭuyūr.*

16. Ms. Istanbul Üniversite 1458(72): The manuscript belongs to a very large collection. Microfilm of this collection is preserved in the central library of Uppsala University, Carolina Rediviva, in Sweden, under catalogue no. 14:4106. The collection is complete and the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* occurs on ff. 231b-232b with a format of 36 cm. by 21 and a written surface of 25,5 cm. by 11,5 cm., 29 lines with 27 words to the page. This Ms., like the other tracts of the collection, is written in ordinary *ta'līq*, dated 1242 A. H. and diacritical marks are frequently added. In this Ms. *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* is called: *Risālat al-marmūza al-ma'rūfa bi'l-Risālat uṭ-ṭair fī waf-i yuwaṣilahu il'l-ḥaqq li'l-šaix ur-Ra'īs Ḥusain ibn 'Abdu'llāh Ibn Sīnā.* This Ms. is followed by an Arabic commentary on the *Risāla* by Šahak.

17. Ms. Tehran Majlis 610(4): The manuscript is the fourth tract of a small but complete collection which comprises five tracts written on folios of 17 cm. by 10 cm., 12 lines to a page written in *nasta'līq* with no indication of diacritical marks or marginal notes. The front page of the collection shows the Majlis-i šūrā's seal with the name of the collection: *Majmū'a šarḥ-i qaṣida mīmīya Ibn Fāriż. Risāla* written on ff. 143-150. It fails to show a table of contents or colophon. The manuscript is not dated but from the style of script, the type of paper and binding it can be concluded that this collection cannot be earlier than the13 century A. H.[34]

18. Ms. Tehran Majlis 1805(53): The manuscript is part of a collection comprising a large amount of tracts. The title page which has a decorated tabular in red shows a table of contents with 140 tracts. The collection consists of 606 folios of *raḥlī* format, 34 cm. by 21 cm.; 25 lines to the page and a binding in red leather and a sun pattern on the front. The *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* appears on ff. 395-396. The collection is written on white European paper, in bold, clear *nasx* script of late 13 century. The colophon does not give a date for the completion of the collection nor does it give a clue as to the name of the scribe who has done a perfect job. The collection does not exhibit any diacritical marks or marginal notes. There are a few glosses on each page. Apart from this the

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[34] Cf. *Catalogue des manuscripts Persans et Arabs de la bibliotheque du Madjless*, vol. p. 364.

collection shows careful writing with heading in red and the main part in black.

19. Ms. Ayasofya 2456(2): This manuscript is recorded by various sources like Mahdawī's *Fihrist*, Anawati's *Mu'allafāt* and the catalogue of the library of Ayasofya. The manuscript is found on ff. 58-73 and covers a written surface of 18 lines on a folio of 24,5 cm. by 17cm. The copyist's name and the date of completion are not stated. Anawati noted, however, that the Ms. belongs to the seventh century.[35]

20. Ms. Ayasofya 3555(6): This collection of Mss. is recorded under reference number 102 in the catalogue of Ayasofya. According to the list of tracts in the collection *Risālat uṭ-ṭuyūr* is tract number. 6 and is followed by a Persian commentary. This collection is not recorded by Mahdawī while Anawati has a clear description of it: A format of 19,5 cm. by 15, covered by a written surface of 14 cm. by 9 cm., 16 lines to page. The *Risāla* is found on ff. 156 a-176a. He also notes that the collection was written in the seventh century.

21. Ms. Revan 2042: This collection of manuscripts is preserved in the library of Revan koshko in Istanbul. It comprises 238 folios of 18,5 cm. by 10 cm. covered by a written surface of 12,5 cm. by 6,5 cm., 21 lines to the page, the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* appears on ff. 226a-227a. On the title page there is a table of contents which is obliterated in one place. The page is impressed by a large round stamp and beneath the seal the reference number of the collection is written. Inscribed on the right side of the page in larger characters is: *Rasā'il ḥakamīya bi xaṭṭ-i t'līq*. The collection is neither vocalized nor marked by any orthographic signs, while it has glosses and marginal notes. The colophon of the last epistle of the collection shows 888 A. H. as the date of completion by a known scribe; 'Abdu'l-Raḥmān ibn 'Alī ibn Murīd in Šīrāz, known as Barg Ṭabīb Šīrāzī.

22. Ms. Nuruosmaniye 4894(79): This manuscript is in a very large collection of tracts, which consists of 597 ff.; the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* occurs on ff. 625-426. The size of folio is 35 cm. by 23 cm., 37 lines to the page. This manuscript is recorded as a 10th century collection written by an unknown scribe in *nasx*.

23. Ms. Tehran Majlis 4542: This collection which contains 19 treatises is in excellent condition, it is complete and contains oriental paper and binding. In this collection the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* appears on ff. 15-

[35] Cf. Anawati, *ibid.*, p. 275.

18 which are 18 cm. by 11 cm., 17 lines to a page, written in a fine *nasx* script by an unknown copyist, except for the front page which has the table of contents which is written in *nasta'līq*. Regarding the date of completion, neither the colophon of the collection nor the *Risāla* mention a date. There is, however, a memorandum on the title page, which states the date of possession: 1025 A. H. Beneath the date a blind seal has been impressed. Apart from the latter, three more seals are impressed, one is blurred, the other is obliterated and the third is the library's stamp. The Ms. is characterized by indication of vowel signs and diacritical marks.

24. Ms. Tehran Majlis 5238(2): This manuscript is part of a large collection, which includes 84 treatises. On the front page, written in cursive *nasta'līq*, a dream is narrated and beneath that a few verses from the *Qur'ān* have been written to remind the reader how God treats martyrs. The collection is written on European paper comprising 606 folios of 34 cm. by 21 cm. 23-25 lines to the page, bound in red leather binding. The *Risāla* appears on ff. 10a-11b. The *Risāla* is called: *Risālat al-ma'rūfat bi- risālat uṭ-ṭair li'l-Šaix ar-ra'īs wa hiya marmuzat fī wasf-i yuṣalu il'l-'ilm al-ḥaqq*. The title is written in large and distinguished characters. The two first lines are inscribed in cursive *nasta'līq* and the rest is written in *nasx*. The *Risāla* has glosses written in the margin as well as other marginal notes. This collection fails to mention the date of completion or the name of the copyist.

After having compared these twenty-four Mss. from the point of view of relative age, reliability of text and state of preservation, I chose thirteen and obtained microfilms or photographs of them. They are listed below in chronological order, each followed by the signum which I have assigned to it. Note that I have also included Mehren's edition in the list for purposes of comparison.

Ms. 3268:	580 A. H.	(A1, A2)	أ١ أ٢
Ms. 4849:	697 A. H.	(B)	ب
Ms. 4853:	7 century A. H.	(J)	ج
Ms. 1147:	7 century A. H.	(D)	د
Ms. 2144:	721 A. H.	(H)	ه
Ms. 1589:	753-811 A. H.	(V)	و
Ms. 1918:	888 A. H.	(Z)	ز
Ms. 1149:	962 A. H.	(Ḥ)	ح
Ms. 4547:	11 century A. H.	(Ṭ)	ط
Ms. 1458:	1242 A. H.	(E)	ي
Ms. 610:	13 century A. H.	(K)	ك

Ms. 5238	13 century	(L) ل
Ms. 1805:	13 A. H.	(M) م
Mehren's printed edition		(N) ن

B. Printed editions of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*

The standard Arabic version of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* was printed in1891 as part of M. A. F. Mehren's edition of Ibn Sina's treatises entitled *Traités Mystiques d' Abou Ali al- Ḥousain b. Abdallah b. Sina ou d'Avicenna.* The section on the *Risāla* is found in *fascicule* II, pp. 42-48. It consists of a brief introduction, followed by a critical edition of the *Risāla* based on a collation of four manuscripts, one of which is found among the manuscripts I have obtained. The letters of the printed edition are large and frequently accompanied by diacritical signs. The printed text is followed by a translation of the *Risāla* into French. In translating it Mehren has taken into consideration the Persian commentary on the *Risāla* by Sahlān Sāwī. His reference manuscript for the Persian commentary was the one which is found in the British Museum under number 978(26). In editing the manuscripts of the *Risāla*, Mehren obviously did not see Ms. 3268(2), because this manuscript is the only one which begins with: *Hal li aḥadin min ixwānī fi an yaḥab lī sam'ahu*, while the others begin with: *Hal li aḥadin min ixwānī fi an yaḥab li min sam'ahu.* Moreover, if Mehren had seen it, he would have mentioned it and referred to many other details, some of which I enumerate below. In Mehren's edition there are some extra words which cannot be found in the Mss. in my possession.

Another version of Ibn Sina's *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* was published by Louis Cheikho a few years later, in 1901 in *al-Mašriq* 19, pp. 882-887. Cheikho's new text edition of the Epistle was based on a collation of two manuscripts which he amended in several places.

Another publication of a version of the *Risāla* is found in *Jāmi' al-badāyi'* by Muḥyi'd-dīn aṣ-Ṣabrī al-Kurdī which appeared in Cairo in 1917. He does not mention the source of his edition nor does he provide a critical edition of the work. It is, however, possible to see at a glance that he has republished Mehren's edition. The *Risāla* appears on pp. 114-119.

There are also three Western translations of the *Risāla*. One is by Henri Corbin in French and was first published in his *Avicenna et le recit visionaire*, 3 vols. This French translation was based on Suhrawardī's Persian translation of the *Risāla*. Corbin's book, including the *Risāla,* was translated into English by W. Trask in 1960, where the translation of the

Risāla appears on pp. 186-192. The Arabic text of the *Risāla* was translated into English by Peter Heath in 1990.[36]

C. Description of the manuscripts of the Persian translations of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*

There are four Persian translations of the *Risāla*: one by Suhrawardī (the martyr), one by Axsīkaṭī, the poet, one by Wajīh ud-dīn and one by an unknown translator. These translations are found in Mss. Tehran Majlis 1918(22),[37] 1919(1),[38] 904; Istanbul Fateh 5426, Esad 3688.

1. Ms. Tehran Majlis 1918(22): This manuscript follows a manuscript of the *Risāla* in Arabic in a collection described above (No. 11) and dated 898 A. H. This translation is attributed to the Iranian poet and scholar Aḥmad Axsīkaṭī known as Ḏu'l-faźāi'l. The translation appears on ff. 221-229. It is important to state that this translation is almost identical with the Persian translation of the *Risāla* which is attributed to Suhrawardī.

2. Ms. Istanbul Fateh 5426: This is a manuscript with mixed content which constitutes a large collection of Suhrawardī's works together with works by other scholars like Muḥammad Ġazzālī. The Persian translation of the *Risāla* by Suhrawardī (d. 587 A. H.)[39] is described as one of his original works, even by Šahrazūrī, his famous disciple. The collection is kept in the library of Fateh in Istanbul. The *Risāla* appears on ff. 99b-102b of 18 cm. by 12 cm., 21 lines to a page. It is written in Persian *nasx* in a very old style in which p is written for b and k for g. It is dated 727 A. H. This manuscript was printed in Stuttgart in 1935.[40]

3. Ms. Istanbul Esad 3688: This collection contains the translation of the *Risāla* by Wajīh ud-dīn. This manuscript is written in *nasx*.

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[36] Cf. Heath, *Intellectual Studies on Islam*, pp. 163-183 where the text of the *Risāla* is on pp. 164-174.

[37] Cf. Ḥā'irī, *Fihrist*, vol. V, p. 412 f.

[38] Cf. Ḥā'irī, *ibid.*, vol. V, p. 414 f.

[39] Šaix Šahāb ud-dīn Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl (the Martyr), is one of the greatest mystical philosophers of the 6th century. He was imprisoned at the order of Ṣalāḥ ud-dīn on a charge of heresy and put to death either by starvation or strangulation by Malik uż-Żāhir, the son of Ṣalāḥ ud-dīn, at Ḥalab in the year 587 A. H.

[40] The detailed information on this edition of the translation appeared in the previous section about the printed editions of Ibn Sina's *Risāla* and its Persian translation.

4. Ms. Tehran Majlis 904. This manuscript is in excellent condition. It contains 226 folios, of 25,5 cm. by 17,5 cm., 12 lines to a page. It is written on European paper bound with brown leather with flap. This collection is called *Taḏkira-yi mumayyiz*. The first 15 pages of this collection are blank and the texts begin on folio 16, upon which the stamp of the library is impressed. The translation is found on ff. 128-137, dated Ḏi'l-ḥijja 1306 A. H. The translation, which is written in *nasta'līq*, does not reveal the name of the copyist. Regarding the contents of the translation it should be noted that the translator who is unknown has rendered Ibn Sina's *Risāla* in his own way and does not try to be loyal to the Arabic text.

D. Description of the manuscripts of the Persian commentary on the *Risālat ut-ṭair*

The commentary on *Risālat ut-ṭair* ascribed to Sahlān Sāwī[41] is extant in about eleven manuscripts, namely Mss. Tehran Majlis 1226(2),[42] 1919(1), 640(2), 5138(7), Sipahsālār 1216(12); Malik 5327(10); Mashad, Astan Quds, 807; British Museum 978, Add. 16,659(8),[43] Bodleian 1422(1), India Office 2150(2).[44] Of these eleven Mss. I have seen seven that I shall describe below:

1. Ms. Tehran Majlis 1226(2): The Manuscript is part of a collection preserved in good condition in the library of Majlis in Tehran. The collection comprises 221 folios of 19,5 cm. by 13, 29 lines to a page; the commentary appears on ff. 169-193 written in clear Persian *nasx*. An oval shaped seal has been impressed on f. 171, there are a few marginal remarks made by a later hand on f. 173, an explanation, in the same later hand is written on f. 175 and a round seal has been stamped on f. 184. The colophon of the *Risāla*, on f. 193, clearly states the date of completion: at noon, 10th of Ša'bān, year 874 A. H., by 'Abdu'l-'Alī al-Ġanī ibn Dāwūd.[45] At the foot of the page there are two impressions of the stamp of an owner, Muḥammad Ma'ṣūm al-Ḥusainī.

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[41] 'Umar ibn Sahlān is twice quoted by Ḥājjī Xalīfa, *Kašf*, vol. II, p. 108 and vol. III. p. 412; he flourished during Sulṭān Sanjar's reign (A. H. 511-552); see Rieu, II. p. 439 and III. p. 1087b; comp. also Ḥājjī Xalīfa III. p. 418 and *Catal. Codd. Or.* III p. 392, No. 10.

[42] Cf. Munzawī, *Fihrist-i nusxahā-yi xaṭṭī-yi fārsī*, p. 811 f.

[43] Cf. Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. II p. 439.

[44] Cf. *Catalogue of the Persian Mss. in the India office library*, p. 1178 f.

[45] Munzawī in *Fihrist*, gives the year 845 A. H. which is incorrect and has named Ḥusain Kāšī as the scribe which is also incorrect. Cf. Munzawī, *Fihrist*, vol. II p. 811.

2. Ms. Tehran Majlis 5138(7): This manuscript is in a rare collection which is called *Jung Ibn Xatūn* and comprises about 630 folios of 33,5 cm. by 21 cm., with a written surface of 15,5 cm. by 26, and 37 lines to the page. The *Risālat ut-ṭair* appears on ff. 81 a-86a.[46] The collection has a table of contents in three pages, illuminated beautifully in gold color and tabulated in gold with the title of each tract in each square. The *Risāḷa* is written in bold *nast'līq* handwriting dated 10th Jamādī II 1030 A. H. in the city of Lahaur by Ḥamza ibn Muḥammad Kaswa.

3. Ms. Bodleian 1422(1): The manuscript contains the first of twenty-eight tracts in a collection of philosophical writing in both Persian and Arabic, only some of which are by Ibn Sina. They are bound together with utmost carelessness. They seem to have been copied at the same time and several of them are by the same hand. The collection counts 169 folios of 33,5 cm. by 21 (*raḥlī* size), 25-27 lines to a page. The commentary appears on ff. 1, 10-12, 9, 16 and 13 (seven folios). The manuscript is written in small cursive *nasta'līq*. The *Risāla* which is included in the commentary is underlined but does not have vowel signs and diacritical points. The collection is dated around 1042-43 A. H.

4. Ms. Tehran Majlis 1919(1): This manuscript is not defective but complete, part of a little collection which consists of 40 folios. The *Risāla*, which counts 24 folios (1-24), is written on dark creme *Sipāhānī* paper of 25 cm. by 13,6 cm., 29 lines to a page. It is bound with a hard black cover. The commentator (Sahlān Sāwī) first explains his motive for composing a commentary on the allegorical Epistle of the Bird by Ibn Sina, then writes the first paragraph of the Epistle in order to interpret it line by line. The scribe has written the Arabic text in a beautiful *nasx* and the commentary in *šikasta nasta'līq*. He has even underlined the text of the *Risāla* and indicated all the diacritical marks and vowel signs in order to make the two texts distinguishable. We learn from the colophon of the manuscript that the copying of the commentary was completed in 1066 A. H. On the last folio a few verses have been included and a name, Muḥammad Hādī Ṭabīb, is written, otherwise the scribe is unknown.

5. Ms. Tehran Majlis. 640(2): The manuscript is in the second part of a collection which comprises 17 books and treatises counting 225 folios of 19,5 cm. by 12 cm., 17 lines to a page. The *Risāla* is found on ff. 55-87 written in *šikasta* and *nasta'līq*. The Arabic text of the *Risāla* is underlined and signed with vowels and diacritical marks. The colophon

[46] Munzawī has trusted the title page of the collection on which the *Risāla* appears on pp. 85-97 but this is wrong. Cf. Munzawī, *Fihrist*, p. 812.

does not mention the name of scribe, but it is very clear about the date of completion: Wednesday 15th Jamādi II 1262 A. H.

6. Ms. British Museum 978(26): The manuscript appears in a collection which counts 582 folios of 15,5 cm. by 22,5 cm., 31 lines to the page. The commentary appears on ff. 424-435, written in small *nasta'līq*, with *'unwāns*, and rolled margins, dated (f. 34 b) A. H. 1182, a memorandum on f. 4 gives a date of possession by Ṭalib ul-Ḥusainī: in 1208, in Muršidābād.[47]

7. Ms. India Office 2150(2): The manuscript is in a little collection which consists of two commentaries on two philosophical treatises by Ibn Sina. It is kept in the library of the India Office. It comprises 47 folios of 23 cm. by 9 cm., 19 lines to a page, written in *nasta'līq*. The *Risāla* appears on ff. 11b-27b. It is neither dated nor signed by a scribe, but it has a small illumination on f. 1b.[48]

The *Risāla* has been commented by three other scholars, namely 'Alī ibn Šāhak, Šarīf Baṣīr ibn Naṣīr al-Hāšimī al-Baġdādī and 'Alī ibn Sulaimān al-Buḥrānī. The Arabic commentary by Šāhak is found in Ms. Üniversite under reference No. 1458(72) which has already been described in this chapter. The commentary by al-Baġdādī which is also in Arabic is found under reference number 3268 which has been presented above. The third Arabic commentary, which is by Buḥrānī, is found under reference number 3688(3), which will be presented below.

E. Transmission of the text of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*

Three goals have been sought in the present section. The first has been to establish a stemma. The second is to establish the different traditions in which each reading of the text has been transmitted. The third goal has been to reconstruct the archetype and from the most reliable Ms.

To reach these goals I chose thirteen of the above-mentioned Mss. and Mehren's printed edition. I previously mentioned that there are fifty-seven extant Mss. of the *Risāla*. Of these Mss. I have seen the twenty-six which I described earlier in this chapter. I obtained copies of thirteen of the twenty-four Mss. among which the oldest Ms. of the *Risāla* is found. I have included Mehren's reading in the apparatus because his text has been quoted in most earlier studies on the *Risāla*.

Before I explain the different traditions of the reading of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* it is important to clarify why I decided to make a new revised

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[47] Cf. Rieu, *Catalogue*, vol. II, p. 438 f.

[48] Cf. *Catalogue of the Persian Mss. in the India office library*, p. 1178 f.

edition of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. Mehren's edition, for example, was the first printed edition of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* (1891). It is based on a collation of four Mss. Two are located in the British Museum: Brit. Museum (*Cat. Codd. manuscript. ar. Mus. Brit.*, t. I, p. 450, No. XXVI, and *ibid.*, No. XXVIII) and two Mss. are found in the library of Leiden University (*Cat. Codd. oriental. Biblioth, Acad. Lugd. Bat.*, t. III, p. 329, No. 1464=Cod. 1020a (10) Warn., and t. IV, p. 313, No. 2144=Cod. 177 (5) Gol.)[49]. The Mss. located in the British Museum are as late as 1182/1768. According to Mahdawī Ms. 1468 cannot be earlier than the seventh century.[50] The fourth Ms. (2144), is dated 721 A. H. This is a well written Ms., but it contains many mistakes and lacunae.

In preparing the present study I found two manuscripts (3268(2),(3)) which antedate the oldest of Mehren's Mss. by about one hundred and forty years. Further I have located some Mss. from Istanbul which have never been collated before as well as some in Tehran which have never even been recorded, as for example, Ms. 1805 which I myself located in the Majlis library.

In checking Mehren's edition against the large number of Mss. I found it became obvious that the basic text could be improved by the readings of the new Mss. For example I found in Mehen's edition many additions which I could not find in the oldest Mss. or I found misreading which were not found anywhere else. Therefore I believed that a new edition appeared to be worthwhile. Of Mehren's four Mss. I have retained Ms. 2144. The other three proved to be incorrect in comparison with the new material.

The reason for a new translation of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* into English goes back to the original Arabic text of the *Risāla*. The only English translation of the text of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* was made by Peter Heath and it is based on Mehren's edition. As my text edition differs on some points from Mehren's it seemed to me that a new translation would be appropriate.

Finally it is worthwhile to mention why I translated the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* into Persian. The Arabic text of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* had been already translated into Persian as early as the fifth century but the translations did not seem to be done faithfully. The translators would have changed, added or explained words and sentences if they had found it necessary. Therefore I have translated the text into modern Persian in an attempt to be as faithful as possible to the original.

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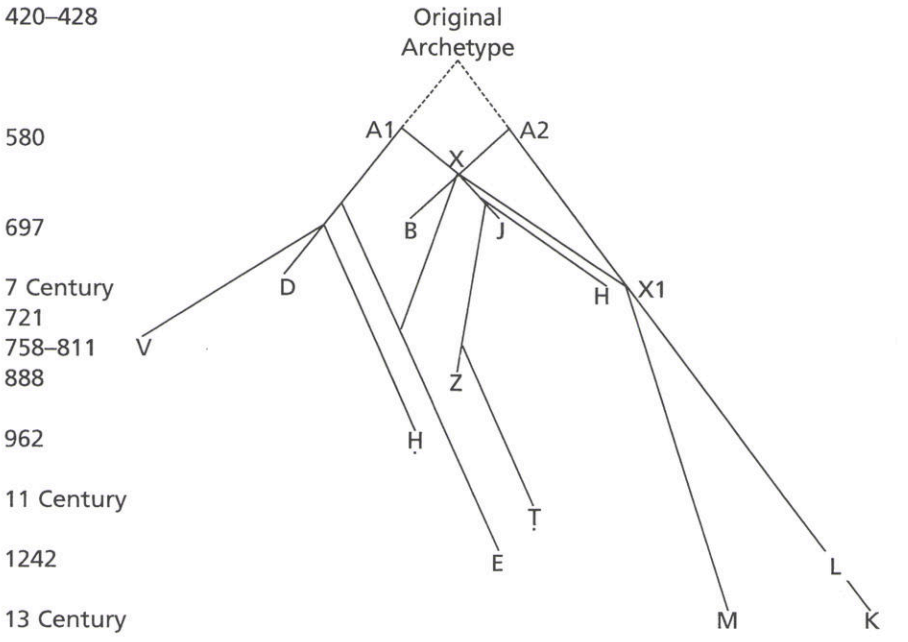
[49] Cf. Mehren, Traités mystiques... d'Avicenna, p. 26.

[50] Cf. Mahdawī, *Fihrist*, p. 34.

F. Evaluation of the manuscripts

With the exception of one Ms. none of the Mss. used for this edition is a direct copy of the other. They all represent a stage of transmission more or less distinct from the archetype, i.e. from the exemplar from which the first split in the exact text-tradition originated. Based on the descriptions above the manuscripts may be arranged into the following stemma:



Two different traditions of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* readings can be found as early as 580 A. H. This can be seen in collection no. 3268 which contains two versions of the Arabic text of the *Risāla* each representing a different tradition. In the manuscript, a text representing one tradition of the *Risāla* precedes the commentary in Arabic by al-Baġdādī, while the text containing the other tradition is presented sentence by sentence with the commentary to each statement inserted between the sentences. A comparison of the two versions in the writing of certain words illustrates the differences. The first word belongs to Ms. 3268(2) which is called A1 and the second which stands against it belongs to Ms. 3268(3) which is called A2 in the English part of this study and ١٢) in the Arabic: *rain> dūn, ad-dīdān> an-naml, subul> sabīl, an-aqrabū> an-adnū, ḥalalnā> anzalnā, ṣaḥn> qaṣr mūjizan–wāfrā> mujizan, biduhn> duhn, ar-rasūl> ar-rusul.*

Ms. 1147 represented as D in the English part and in the Arabic is a descendant of Ms. A1, although it is not possible to see that it has been copied directly from A1.

Ms. 1147 represented as D in the English part and in the Arabic is a descendant of Ms. A1, although it is not possible to see that it has been copied directly from A1.

Ms. D is in total agreement with the tradition represented by A1 but it contains errors, misreading, additions and lacunas, which are not found in either A1 or A2. Errors like *ṭibātū* instead of replacements like *āṭārinā* for *aqdāminā* additions like *dahišan ažīmā* for *dahišan* or *ajma'īn*. As some of these errors and additions are found in the other Mss. one may conclude that D was copied through an intermediary copy.

Ms. 1589, represented by V in the English part and و in the Arabic, also belongs to tradition A1. This Ms. is also in agreement with Ms. Ḥ and in some errors is in agreement with D such as: *zādatnā* in D and *zādanā* in V which appears as *zādat* in the main traditions. In this Ms. one can see that it has been copied from an older Ms. because *yī'* has not yet turned into *ḥamza* while in the later readings this change has occurred. Another revealing detail of orthography is that *alif maqṣūra* in the case of *ista'dā* has turned into *alif mamdūda* and has become *ista'dā*

Ms. 4849, represented by letter B in the English part and ب in the Arabic, is a contaminated Ms. In this copy not only a mixture of the two traditions appear but the reader also encounters a third tradition of the *Risāla* readings in the margin. This Ms., which has no descendant among my Mss., belongs to a group of Mss. which possibly originated from the same archetype, an exemplar in which the two traditions were already mingled (designated as X in my stemma). In B one can see a good example of a very early text edition as well as a contaminated text, as the scribe has made a lot of emendations and additions. He sometimes notes both variants of one word like *'araźa 'adara* and sometimes chooses between the variant which seems correct to him.

Ms. 4853, identified as J in the English part and ج in the Arabic, is a descendant of the mixed exemplar designated as X to which Ms. B belongs. These two Mss. are parallel. They are not dependent on each other but they have many things in common which imply that they belong to the same family. But the difference is that Ms. J, although representing a mixture of traditions A1 and A2, does not contain any additional sentences such as appear in the margin of B. These two Mss. were copied about the same time and both contain the words *darin, an-naml, wa'd-dīdān, subul, an aqrabū, ḥalalnā, ṣaḥn*. It is in this Ms. that the words *ḥadaṭa lahā* instead of *'adara* عدر or *'araza* عرز are seen for the first time.

Ms. 1918, identified by Z in the English part and ز in the Arabic, belongs to the same tradition that Mss. B and J are derived from. In this Ms. there is no trace of the additional words written in the main text or margin of Ms. B. Ms. Z is a mixture of tradition A1 and A2 and at the

this Ms. is descended from the same archetype to which Mss. B and J belong.

Ms. 4547, represented by the letter Ṭ in the English and ط in the Arabic part, belongs to the same family as Z. Their common words are: *ḥadaṭa, an-naml, tabtali'ū, sabīl, sāra'ū, āṭārinā, ḥalalnā, ar-rusūl, ṣaḥn.* In Ṭ a mixture of the two traditions (A1, A2) can be observed. There are also common errors which are found in both Z and Ṭ as for example *fawāfiqūnī*. There are also common additions like *sāri'ū*. It is also in these two that one can observe that *yā'* has been changed into *ḥamza* and *alif-maqṣūra* into *mamdūda*. In spite of all the similarities one cannot determine that Ṭ ط has been copied directly from Z because at many other points they differ from each other.

Ms. 2144, recognized as H in the English part and ه in the Arabic, is derived from the same exemplar that Mss. Z, and J are. Their common words are enumerated below: *aḥdaṭa, darin, ad-dīdān, taltaqū nazalnā.* In this Ms. there are words which belong to tradition A1 such as *ṣaḥn, ad-dīdān* and words like *an adnū* which is associated with A2 or *nazalnā.*

Ms. 1458, known as E in the English part of this study and ي in the Arabic, has been copied from an intermediary exemplar which was a descendant of A1 but it was not copied from it. Words like: *darin, ad-dīdān, an adnū, ar-rasūl, ṣaḥn* show that the Ms. 1458 was copied from an exemplar which was a mixture of A1 and X.

Ms. 1805, represented by the letter M, in the English and م in the Arabic, is copied from an exemplar which was also a mixture of traditions A1 and A2 with addition of the word *sāri'ū* which is first found in B. Words from A1 in this Ms. are *ad-dīdān, an aqrabū, ṣaḥn, ḥalalnā, mūjizan wāfirā, ar-rasūl, biduhn* and words from A2 are *dūn* and a few others.

In this Ms. *ista'dā* is written in the same way as in B. There are also some misreadings in M, like *aš-šauq* instead of *aš-šaub,* which appear in a few other Mss. but which do not show that they belong to the same family. In this Ms. there are many orthographically mistakes which are due to carelessness.

Ms. 1149, identified as Ḥ in the English part and ح in the Arabic, has much in common with D. For example they both contain additions like *laqad* which are not found in any of the other Mss. It also contains additional words like *ajma'ūn* which appears as *ajma'īn* in D. *Kuntu* and *'aẓīmā* are two other examples which show a close relation between Ḥ and D. There are also some lacunas like *fī* which are found in both. These similarities are not enough to determine that they were copied from each other because at the same time there are many differences. For example there are misreading like *'illa* علله instead of *ġifla* غفله in D which are not found in Ḥ. Or replacements like *āṭarinā* in D which appears as

aqdāminā in Ḥ. There are additions in Ḥ which are not found in any of those older Mss. except B. Some of them are words like *sāri'ū* and *faṭanan ḍakīyā*.

Possibly Ḥ was copied from an exemplar which contained the third tradition of the *Risāla* readings. This tradition which appears first in the marginal part of B is found in the main text of Ḥ and in the Mss. located in the British Museum which were collated by Mehren.

Regarding the third tradition it is difficult to determine if it existed as early as the other two because the earliest evidence of its existence appeared in B and B is about one hundred and eighty-three years later than A1 and A2. Ḥ with the help of B represents the third tradition which is mainly characterized by many additional words and sentences.

Ms. 5238, identified by the letter L, in the English and ل in the Arabic, was copied from an exemplar which belongs to the same family as A2 because there are so many words in the text which are in common with the words in tradition A2. At the same time however there are some other words which show that the exemplar that the copyist had was the descendant of an intermediary copy.

Ms. 610, represented by K in the English and ك in the Arabic, is the only Ms. used for this edition which is a direct copy of another one. To be more specific, K is directly copied from L. K contains the same additions like *as-samm* which are found in M, the same misreading like *ṭāla* for *ṭāba* or *ḍāhiba* instead of *xāźźa* and *fajtabainā* instead of *faaṣabnā* or *kaffa* instead of *kaššafa*. The reasons which made me believe that these two Mss. belonged more to the tradition of A2 are words like *subīl* instead of *subul an adnū*, instead of *an aqrabū, nazalnā* instead of *ḥalalnā ar-rusul* instead of *ar-rasūl* or *qaṣr* instead of *ṣaḥn* and many others. However I cannot say that they are direct descendants of Ms. A2 because some words from A1 can be found in them such as *ad-dīdānl* which is *an-naml* in A2. Regarding the printed editions of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* it was mentioned earlier in this chapter that Cheikho and al-Kurdī each had a printed edition of the *Risāla*. In collating my Mss. I discarded these two, because Cheikho's edition offered nothing that was not to be found in the other sources and al-Kurdī had not provided a critical edition of the work.

In preparing the text edition, I have classified the Mss. into two major groups and a subgroup. VDḤ constitute the first group descending from A1, LK the second group deriving from A2. Then as early as the seventh century a new tradition appears which contains mainly a mixture of the two traditions (representing the fourth tradition), except for B which contains additions (representing the third tradition) not found in the two traditions. The Mss. belonging to the fourth tradition constitute a sub-

century a new tradition appears which contains mainly a mixture of the two traditions (representing the fourth tradition), except for B which contains additions (representing the third tradition) not found in the two traditions. The Mss. belonging to the fourth tradition constitute a sub-group represented by NBMJZṬEH. These are derived from an exemplar which is called X in the stemma.

In reconstructing the text I was led by two directing principles: to prefer the reading which was the oldest and the most reliable. Therefore I chose A1 as my basic text. I have tried to avoid additions found in the later manuscripts. It has also been my intention to establish the original wording when a mistake regarding misreading or miswriting has occurred in the text.

There are a few signs in the apparatus that require explanation. Whenever there is a lacuna in the exemplar which has been consulted it is illustrated by: <, >this sign shows an addition. * this sign refers to marginal notes in the Ms. A ( ) which contains a number implies an addition or a lacuna.

CHAPTER III

A Critical text edition of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
رسالة مرموزة له فى وصف يوصله إلى العلم الحق وهى رسالة الطّير١

هل لأحدٍ من إخوانى فى٢ أن يهب لى سمعه٣ قدر ما ألقى إليه طرفاً من أشجانى عَساه يتحمل٤ عنّى بالشركة٥ بعض أعبائها فإن الصّديق لن يهذّب عن الشوب٦ أخاه ما لم يصن (٧) فى ضرائك عن الكدر صفاه. وأني لك بالصّديق المُماحِض؟ وقد جعلت الخلّة تِجارةً، يفزع إليها إذا استَدعَت٨ إلى٩ الخليل داعية وطر، وترفض مراعاتها إذا غزر١٠ الاستغناء، فلن يزار رفيق١١ إلاّ إذا زارت عارضة، ولن يذكر١٢ خليل١٣ إلاّ إذا ذُكرت مأربة. اللّهم إلاّ إخوان١٤ جمعتهم القرابة الإلهيّة وألّفت بينهم المجاورة العُلوية، ولاحظوا الحقائق بعين البصيرة، وجلّوا(١٥) درن١٦ الشك عن السّريرة فلن يجمعهم إلاّ منادى اللّه١٧. ويلكم إخوان الحقيقة باثوا١٨ وتضاموا١٩ وليكشفنّ كلّ واحدٍ منكم لأخيه الحجب عن خالصة لبّه ليطالع بعضكم بعضاً ويستكمل٢٠ بعضكم ببعض.

١-آ٢: رسالة الطّير المرموزة له عملها قبل حصوله بالجبل؛ د: بسم اللّه الرحمن الرحيم وبه الاستعانة ومنه التوفيق قال الشيخ الرئيس ابن سينا؛ ه: بسم اللّه الرحمن الرحيم وبه اتكل رسالة الطّير من كلام الشيخ الحمدلله حقّ حمده والصلوة على محمد وآله واصحابه وسلّم تسليما؛ ط: رسالة تعّرف برسلة الطّير كتبها ابو على بن سينا إلى كافة إخوانه واصدقائه؛ ل: هذا رسالة المعروفه برسالة الطّير للشيخ الرئيس وهى مرموزة فى وصف توصل الى العلم الحق بسم اللّه الرحمن الرحيم؛ ن: بسم اللّه الرحمن الرحيم وما توفيقى إلا باللّه عليه توكّلت وهو حسبى. ٢-د، ز، ى: فى>. ٣-ب،ج، د، ه، و، ز، ح، ط، ى ك، ل، م، ن: من سمعه. ٤-ب، ج، د، ه، ى، ن: ان يتحمل. ٥-د: بالشركة>. ٦-و، م: الشوق. ٧-ن: فى سرائك. ٨-ه: استدعيت؛ ل: استعدت. ٩-آ٢، ح: الى>. ١٠-آ١، آ٢، د، م: عدر؛ ب: عرض عذر؛ و، ح، ل: عرض؛ ك، ن: عرضت؛ ج: حدث لها؛ احدث: ه، ز، ط؛ ى: غزر. ١١-ب: الخليل؛ ه؛ صديق؛ ط: خليل. ١٢-آ٢، م: ولم يذكر. ١٣-ب: الخليل؛ ه، ط: رفيق. ١٤-د، ه، ط، ل، ك، م: إخوانا. ١٥-ن: وجلواالوسخ. ١٦-آ١، د، و، ح، ط، ل، ك: رين؛ ن: وورين؛ آ٢، م: دون؛ ب، ج، ه، ز، ى: درن. ١٧-ه: اللّه تعالى. ١٨-ج، د: ثباتوا؛ ك: ثابتوا؛ ل: تاثوا؛ ى: اثوا. ١٩-ن: تصابوا. ٢٠-ل، ن: ليستكمل.

ويلكم إخوان الحقيقة تقبّعوا١ كما تتقنع٢ القنافذ فأعلنوا بواطنكم وأبطنوا ظواهركم فباللّه٣ إن الجلى٤ لباطنكم وإن الخفى لظاهركم.
ويلكم إخوان الحقيقة أنسلخوا عن جلودكم انسلاخ الحيّة٥ ودبوا دبيب الديدان٦ وكونوا عقارب أسلحتهم ٧ فى أذنابهم ٨ فإنّ الشيطان لن يراوغ الإنسان إلاّ من ورائه٩ وتجرّعوا الذعاف١٠ تعيشوا واستحبّوا الممات تحيوا. وطيروا ولا تتّخذوا وكراً تنقلبون إليه فإن مصيدة الطّيور اوكارها وإن صدّكم عوز الجناح فتلصّصوا تظفّروا فخير الطّلائع ما قوى على الطيران. كونوا نعاما تلتقم١١الجنادل١٢ المحماة ١٣ وافاعى تسترط العظام الصليبة١٤ وسمادل تغشى الضرّام على ثقة وخفافيش لا تبرز نهاراً فخير الطّيور خفافيشها. ويلكم إخوان الحقيقة اعنى١٥ النّاس من يجرى١٦ على غده وافشلهم من قصر عن أمده.
ويلكم إخوان الحقيقة لا عجب أن اجتنب ملك سواءً وارتكبت بهيمة قبيحاً١٧ بل العجب عن١٨ البشر إذا استعصى١٩ على الشّهوات وقد ضيّع على استئثارها صورته أو بذل لها الطاعة وقد نوّر بالعقل جبلّته (٢٠) ولعمرو اللّه بذّ(٢١) الملك بشر ثبت عند زيال٢٢ الشهوة فلم تزلّ قدمه عن موطئه٢٣ فيه وقصر عن البهيمة إنسي فلم تف قواه بدراء شهوة تستدعيه.

١ـ ن: تقنعوا. ٢ـ تتقبع؛ ه: ينقنع؛ و، ى: تقبع؛ ز، ح، ط، ك، ل، م: يتقبع. ٣ـ ب: فواللّه؛ ج، د، و، ح: فتاللّه. ٤ـ ح: إنّ الجّلى>. ٥ـ ن: الحيات. ٦ـ آ٢، ط: النمل؛ ب، ج: النمل والديدان. ٧ـ ه: اسلحتكم؛ ب، ج، د، و، ز، ح، ط، ل، م، ن:أسلحتها.
٨ـ ه: اذنابكم؛ ب، ج، د، و، ز، ح، ط، ل، م، ن: أذنابها. ٩ـ آ٢: وراه. ١٠ـ ط، ك، ل: السّم الذعاف. ١١ـ ب: يتبلع؛ ه: تلتقموا؛ ط: تبتلعو؛ ل، ك، ن: تلتقط. ١٢ـ ج: الحجارة. ١٣ـ آ١، د، ط: المحمية؛ ن: المحميات.١٤ـن: الصلبه. ١٥ د: ارذل؛ ك: اشجع؛ ه: اعنى؛ م: اعيى؛ ح، ل، ن: اغنى؛ آ١،آ٢، ب، ج، و، ز: اغبى. ١٦ـ ب، ه، و، ز، ح، ط، ل، ن: يجترى. ١٧ـ د، ح: فحشا. ١٨ـ آ٢: من ١٩ـ ب: استولى. ٢٠ ـ ب: جبلته الله. ٢١ـ ى: بل فاق<. ٢٢ـ ب: زوال؛ ل: مزاوله. ٢٣ـ ل، ك: مواطيه.

وأرجع إلى رأس الحديث فأقول برزت طايفه تقتنص فنصبوا الحبائل١ ورتّبوا الشّرك وهيّؤوا٢ الطعم٣ وتواروا في الحشيش وأنا في سربة طير إذ لحظونا فصفروا مستدعين. فأحسّسنا بخصب وأصحاب ما تخالج في صدورنا ريبة ولا زعزعنا٤ عن قصدنا تهمة.

فابتدرنا إليهم مقبلين وسقطنا خلال٥ الحبائل (٦) فإذا الحلق٧ تنضمّ على٨ أعناقنا والشرك يتشبّث بأجنحتنا والحبائل تتعلّق بأرجلنا ففزعنا إلى الحركة فما زادت٩ إلاّ تعسيرا١٠ فاستسلمنا للهلاك وشغل كلّ واحد منّا ما خصّه من الكرب١١ عن الاهتمام لأخيه وأقبلنا نتبيّن١٢ الحيل في سبل١٣ التخليص١٤ زماناً حتى أنسينا صورة أمرنا ١٥ واستأنسنا بالشّرك واطمأنّا إلى الأقفاص.

فاطلعت ذات يوم من خلال الشبك، فلحظت رفقة من الطّير أخرجت رؤوسها وأجنحتها عن الشّرك وبرزت عن أقفاصها تطير وفي أرجلها بقايا الحبائل لا هي تؤودها فتعصّبيها١٦ النجاة ولا تبينها فتصفو لها الحياة فذكّرتني ما كنت أنسيته ونغصّت على١٧ ما ألّفته فكدت أنحلّ تأسّفا أو تنسل روحي تلهّفا.

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١ ـ ز: الحبلل. ٢ـ آ٢، ه، و، ز، ن:هياوا. ٣ـ و: الطعام؛ ن: الطعمه. ٤ ب، ج، و، ز، ح، ن: زعزعتنا؛ ى: عرجتنا. ٥ـ آ٢، ب، ه، و، ز، ح، م، ن: في خلال. ٦– د، ن: الحبايل أجمعين ؛ ح: أجمعون. ٧ـ ى:نحن بخلق. ٨ـ ب، ج: في. ٩– و، د، ن: زادتنا؛ ز: زادنا. ١٠ـ ه، ك، ل، م: تعيرا. ١١ـ م: من الكرب›. ١٢ـ آ٢: يسير؛ ه: تيسير؛ ل: نتدبر. ١٣ـ آ٢، ز، ح، ك، ل، م، ن: سبيل؛ ه: طرق. ١٤ـ ح: الخلاص؛آ٢ ، ى، ك، ل، م، ن: التخلص.١٥ـ ب: امورنا. ١٦ـ م: فتفضلها؛ ن: فتعصبها. ١٧–د: الى ماكنت‹.

فناديتهم من وراء القفص أن أقربوا١ منّى توقفونى٢ على حيلة الرّاحة (٣) فقد أعيتنى٤ (٥) فتذكّروا خدع المقتنصين. فما زادوا إلاّ نفارا٦ فناشدتهم بالخِلّة القديمة والصحبة المصونة والعهد المحفوظ ما أحّل بقلوبهم الثقة ونفى عن صدورهم الريبة فوافونى حاضرين فسألتهم عن حالهم فذكروا أنّهم ابتلوا بما ابتليت به فاستثبتوا٧ واستأنسوا بالبلوى.

ثّم عالجونى فنحيت الحبالة٨ عن رقبتى والشّركة ٩ عن١٠أجنحتى وفتح باب القفص وقيل لى استغنم١١ النجاة فطالبتهم بتخليص رجلى١٢ عن١٣الحلقة.١٤ فقالوا لو قّدرنا عليها١٥لابتدرنا أولاً وخلّصنا أرجلنا١٦وإنى يشفيك العليل.

فنهضت من١٧ القفص١٨ اطير فقيل لى ان أمامك بقاعاً١٩ لن تأمن٢٠ المحذور٢١ إلاّ أن تاتى عليها قطعاً فأقتف آثارنا ننج بك ونهدك سواء السبيل٢٢ فسآوى٢٣ بنا الطيران بين صدفى جبل الآ له فى واد معشب خصيب بل مجدب خريب حتّى تخلّف عنا جنابه وجزنا جيزته ووافينا هامة الجبل. ٢٤ وإذا أمامنا ثمانى٢٥ شواهق تنبو عن قللها٢٦ اللواحظ وقال بعض٢٧ لبعضٍ سارعوا فلا(٢٨) مأمن٢٩ إلاّ بعد ٣٠ أن٣١ نجوزها٣٢ ناحين فعانقنا الشّد٣٣حتّى أتينا على ستّ٣٤ من شوامخها٣٥ وانتهينا إلى السّابع.

١- آ٢، ه، ى، ل، ط، ك: ان ادنوا. ٢ـ و: لقوى؛ ز، ط: فوافقونى؛ و: تواقفونى؛ م: قوفونى. ٣- ب: فاذاعنه‹. ٤- ن: اعنقتنى. ٥ـ ن: طول المقام›. ٦- ل: فقارا. ٧-ي، ن: فاستأيسوا؛ ط: فاستاسوا. ٨ـ ى: الخلق. ٩ـ ط، ي، ن: الشرك. ١٠ـ ن: من. ١١- م، ن: اغتنم. ١٢- ك، ل: رجل. ١٣-د: من. ١٤-ى: الحبالة. ١٥- ب: إليها. ١٦- ب: ارجلنا› ١٧- ن: عن. ١٨- م: وراء القفص.١٩ـ ب: مقاما. ٢٠- ى: ان تامن. ٢١- ح، ل، ك، م، : المحذور فيه .٢٢- ب، ى: الى سواء السبيل. ٢٣ـ ط: فتساوى. ٢٤ ـ ط: الجبل›. ٢٥- آ١، آ٢، ب، ج، د، ط، ح، ي، ك، ل، م: ثمان. ٢٦ـى: مداها. ٢٧- ز، ح، ط، ل، ك، م، ن: بعضنا. ٢٨- آ١: تبيتواعلى‹. ٢٩- آ٢، ب، ج: فلامامن؛ د، ه، ى: فلانامن؛ ح، ل، ك، ن: فلن نامن. ٣٠- ح: حتى؛ ب، و، م: بعد›. ٣١- ح: ان›. ٣٢- ى: نقطعها. ٣٣-آ١، آ٢، ى: السير. ٣٤ ب، د، و، ح، ن: ستّة.
٣٥ـ ح: شواهقها؛ ز، ك: شواهق.

فلّما تغلغنا١ تخومة٢ قال بعضنا لبعض٣ هل لكم فى الجمام٤ فقد اوهننا النصب وبيننا وبين الأعداء مسافة قاصية. فرأينا آن تخصّ٥ للجمام من ابداننا نصيبا فانّ الشّرود على٦ الرّاحة أهدى إلى النجاة من الانبثاث٧ فوقفنا على قلّتة فاذا جنان مخضّرة الأرجاء عامرة الأقطار مثمرة الأشجار جاريّة الأنهار يروى بصرك نعيمها بصور تكاد لبهايها٨ تدهش٩ العقول وتستنهب١٠ الألباب وتسمعك (١١) اغانى شّجيه والحانا مطربة ويشمك روائح لا يدانيها المسك السّرى ولا العنبر الّطرىّ.

فأصبنا١٢ من ثماره وشربنا من انهاره ومكثنا به ريثما أطرحنا الإعياء وقال بعضنا لبعض١٣ لا مخدعة١٤ كالأمن ولا منجاة كالأحتياط ولا حصن أمنع من أساءة الظّنون وقد امتدّ بنا المقام بهذه١٥ البقعة على شفا غفلة وورأنا أعداؤنا يقتفون أقدامنا١٦ ويتفقدون مقامنا فهلّموا نبرح١٧ ونهجر هذه البقعة وإن طاب١٩ الثواء بها فلا طيب كالسلامة.

واجمعنا على الرحّلة وأنفصلنا عن النّاحية وحللنا٢٠ بالثّامن (٣١) فإذا شامخ (٢٢) خاض٢٣ برأسه ٢٤فى عنان السّماء تسكن جوانبه٢٥ طيور لم ألق٤٤ أعذب ٢٦ ألحاناً٢٧ وأحسن٢٨ الواناً وأظرف صوراً وأطيب عشرة٢٩منها ولما حللنا فى جوارها عرفنا من إحسانها وتلطّفها وايناسها(٣٠) أيادى لم نف٣١ بقضاء اهونها٣٢ (٣٣) ولما تقّرر (٣٤) بيننا وبينها٣٥ الانبساط٣٦ اوقفناها٣٧ على ما الّم٣٨ بنا (٣٩) فأظهرت المساهمة فى الاهتمام.

١-ط،ي، ن: تغلغلنا. ٢ـل، ك: فى تخومة. ٣ـ آ١، د، ى: لبعض›. ٤ـد: الراحه الجمام . ٥-ز، م: نحظ.٦ـ ج، ز: عن؛ ط، م: الى. ٧- آ٢ ، ن: الانبتات. ٨ـد: حسنها. ٩ـن: تشوش. ١٠-ن: تستبهت.١١ـن: الحانا مطربه للاذاننا‹. ١٢- ه: نجينا؛ ح، ل، ك: فاجتبينا. ى، ن: فاكلنا. ١٣- ط: بعضا. ١٤-ب، ز، ح، ط، م، ن: سارعوا لامخدعة. ١٥- ى، ن: فى هذا. ١٦ـ ز: آثارنا‹؛ د، ط، ن: آثارنا. ١٧- آ٢، ز، ل، ك، م: نبترح. ١٨ـل، ك، م: طال. ١٩- آ٢، ه، ز، ل، ك: نزلنا. ٢٠ـم: قد‹. ٢١ـن: منها‹. ٢٢- ل، ك: ذاهب. ٢٣ـ ز، م، ن: رأسه. ٢٤ـ ح: فى جوانبه. ٢٥ ج: لم ار. ٢٦ ه: لطرب.٢٧ـى: منها الوانا. ٢٨- آ٢، ح، ل، ك: لاحسن الوانا. ٢٩- ن: معاشرة. ٣٠- ن: ايناسها ماتغمدتنا به. ٣١- آ٢، ب، د، و، ز، ح، ى، ل، ك، م، ن: لن نفى. ٣٢- ل، ك: حقها.٣٣-ـه: شكرا‹؛ ح، ن: وان قصرنا عليه مده عمرنا بل استمددنا إليه اضعاف‹. ٣٤ـى: فيما‹. ٣٥ـ ح: بينها›. ٣٦ـل، ك: الأمرعلى الانبساط. ٣٧ـل، ك: أوقفاها. ٣٨ـل، ك: الم›. ٣٩ـ ط: بنا›.

وذكرت أن وراء هذا١ الجبل مدينه يتّبوها٢ الملك الأعظم وأىّ مظلوم استعدى به٣ وتوكّل٤ عليه كشف٥ عنه الضّراء بقوته ومعونته فأطمأنّا٦ إلى إشارتها٧ وتيمّمنا٨ مدينة الملك حتّى٩ حللنا بفنايه منتظرين لإذنه.
فخرج الأمر بإذن١٠ الواردين١١ فأدخلنا١٢ قصره فإذا نحن بصحن١٣ لا يتضمّن وصف١٤ رحبه١٥ فلّما عبرناه رفع لنا الحجاب عن صحن فسيح مشرق استضقنا١٦ لديه الأول بل استصغرناه حتّى وصلنا حجرة١٧ الملك.
فلّما رفع لنا الحجاب ولحظ١٨ الملك فى جماله١٩ مقلنا٢٠ علقت به أفئدتنا ودهشنا دهشًا٢١ عاقنا عن الشّكوى. فوقف على ما غشّينا فردّ علينا الثبات بتلطّفه حتّى أجترأنا على مكالمته وعبرنا بين يديه عن قصّتنا فقال (٢٢) لن يقدر٢٣ على حلّ الحبايل عن أرجلكم إلاّ عاقدوها بها وإنّى منفذ إليه رسولاً يسومهم٢٤ إرضاءكم وإماطة السوء٢٥ عنكم فانصرفوا مغبوطين.
وهوذا نحن فى الطريق مع الرسول٢٦ وإخوانى متشبّثون بى يطلبون٢٧ إلىّ حكاية ٢٨ بهاء الملك بين أيديهم وسأصفه وصفا موجزا وافرا٢٩. فاقول انه الملك الّذى٣٠ مهما٣١ حصلت فى خاطرك جمالا لا يمازجه٣٢ قبح وكمالا لا يشوبه نقص صادفته مستوفى لديه. فكلّ كمال٣٣ (٣٤) بالحقيقه (٣٥) له وكّل نقص ولو بالمجاز٣٦ منفىّ عنه كله. لحسنه وجه ولجوده يد. من خدمه فقد اغتنم السعادة القصوى ومن صرمة فقد خسر الاخرة والدنيا. ٣٧

١ـ م، ك، ل: هذه. ٢ـ أ١، ب، د، و، ز، م: يتبوها؛ أ٢، ه، ج، ح، ط، ل، ك، ن: يتبواها؛ ى: يتباوها ٣ـ ب، ج، ز، م، ن: استعداه؛ ه، ى: استعاذ؛ ط: استدعاه؛ ٤ـ ح: توكلته. ٥ـ ه، ز، ل، ك: كف. ٦ـ و: فأطمئنت؛ ى، ن: فأطمانا. ٧ـ و، م، ك، ل: إشارته. ٨ـ د، و، ك، ل: تمنا. ٩ـ ح: حتى>. ١٠ـ أ٢، د،ل، ك: بالإذن؛ و: بامر. ١١ـ أ٢، د، ل، ك: للواردين. ١٢ـ ل، ك: صفته. ١٣ـ ب: فلاح لنا. ١٤ـ أ٢، ح، ل، ك: قصر؛ و: بساحة. ١٥ـ ب، ج، : رحبته. ١٦ـ ه: استصفانا؛ و: استذقنا. ١٧ـ م، ن: إلى حجرة. ١٨ـ ه: لمح؛ ى: ولحظت. ١٩ـ أ٢: بجمالنا؛ ط، ك، ل: وجماله ؛ م: ملك فى جماله>. ٢٠ـ ب، ح، ل: معلنا؛ ن: مقلتنا. ٢١ـ د، ح: دهشا عظيما. ٢٢ـ ب، ح: لنا<. ٢٣ـ أ٢، ب، ج، ك، ل: لايقدر. ٢٤ـ ب: ليشوقهم؛ ه، ح، ك، ل: ليسومهم؛ ط: لايشومهم؛ و: ليصومهم. ٢٥ـ ن: الشرك. ٢٦ـ أ٢، ج، ز، ط، ل، ك: الرسل. ٢٧ـ أ٢: يطالبونى؛ ب، و، ل، ك، م: يطالبوننى؛ ج، ز، ط، ى، م، ن: يطلبون منى؛ د، : يطلبون؛ ه: يطالبون. ٢٨ـ أ٢، ب، ل، ك، م: بحكايه. ٢٩ـ أ٢، ز، ى: وافرا>؛ ح: موجزا وافرا>. ٣٠ـ و: الذى>. ٣١ـ و: متى. ٣٢ـ أ١: يخالطه. ٣٣ـ أ٢، ج، ه، و، ط، ك، ل: جمال. ٣٤ـ ل، ك: فهو<. ٣٥ـ ط، و، ن: حاصل <. ٣٦ـ ك، ل: فهو<. ٣٧ـ ب: الدنيا والاخرة؛ د، ه، ى، م: الاولى.

وكم من اخ ١ قرع٢ سمعه قصّتى فقال اراك مّس عقلك مّس٣ أو ألم بك لم (٤) ولا واللّه٥ ما طرت (٦) بل طار٧ عقلك وما اقتنصت ٨ بل اقتنص لبّك أنّى يطير البشر أو ينطق الطّير. كأنّ المرار(٩) غلبت.١٠ فى١١ مزاجك واليبوسة١٢ قداستولت على دماغك. وسبيلك ان تشرب طبيخ١٣ الأفثيمون١٤ وتتعّهد الاستحمام١٥ بالماء العذب الفاتر١٦. وتستنشق بدهن١٧ النيلوفر وتترفّه فى الأغذية١٨ (١٩) وتهجر السّهر وتقلّ ٢٠ الفكر.
فأنا٢١ قد٢٢ عهدناك فيما ٢٣ خلا٢٤ لبيبا (٢٥) واللّه مطّلع٢٦ على ضمايرنا فلأنها٢٧ من جهتك مهتمة ولإختلال حالك (٢٨) مختلة٢٩ ما أكثر ما يقولون وأقل ما ينجع وشرّ المقال ما ضاع (٣٠) وباللّه الاستعانة وعن٣١ النّاس البراءة ومن اعتقد غير هذا خسر (٣٢) وسيعلم الذين ظلموا أىّ منقلب ينقلبون.

تمت الرسالة المرموزة على لسان الطّير والحمدلله وحده وصلى اللّه على سيدنا محمّد النبى وآله الطيبين الطاهرين.٣٣

١ـ ط: صديق*. ٢ـ ب، م: قد قرع. ٣ـ ط، ن: مسا. ٤ـ ب، م: قد‹. ٥ـ ج: ولا والله›. ٦ـ ن: ولكن. ٧ـ و: طارت. ٨ـ آ١، د: لااقتنصت. ٩ـ ن: قد‹. ١٠ـ ب، د، ى، ط، ح، ه، ز، ك، ل، ن: غلب. ١١ـ ب، ج، د، ى، ط، ح، و، ز، ك، م، ل، ن: على. ١٢ـ د: الوسوسة. ١٣ـ ن: طبخ. ١٤ـ آ١، ٢، ط: الافتيمون. ١٥ـ ه: استحرام: ى: بالاستحمام. ١٦ـ ن: الفاتر العذب. ١٧ـ آ٢، ب، د، ل، ك: دهن. ١٨ـ ط: وتترفه فى الاغذيه وتهجر السهر›. ١٩ـ ن: وتستاثر منها المخصبه وتجتنب الباه؛ * ح: ولتستأثر منها المخصبه ولجذب الباه. ٢٠ـ ه: تقلل. ٢١ـ م: فانك. ٢٢ـ آ٢، ط: قد›. ٢٣ـ ل، ك: فما. ٢٤ـ و: خلى. ٢٥ـ ن، ح: وشاهدناك فطنا ذكيا‹.*. ٢٦ـ و: تعالى؛ ه: تطلع. ٢٧ـ د، ى، ح، ه، ب، ك، ل، ن، : فانها؛ ب، ج، ط، ز: فانا؛ م: فلانها›؛ و: فاننا. ٢٨ـ ط، ن: حالنا‹. ٢٩ـ ج: مغتمه؛ و: محطه. ٣٠ـ ط: الوقت‹. ٣١ـ ى، ل، ك: من. ٣٢ـ ن: فى الاخرة والاولى‹. ٣٣ـ ط: وقد تمت رسالة الطّير للشيخ الرئيس ابى على سينا رحمه اله وغفرله فى جمادى الاول لسنة سبع وثمان مائة؛ ى، ه: تمت الرسالة بعونه وكرمه؛ ن: ثم تمت رسالة الطير ولله الحمد كثيرا كفايه.

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*ز: صديق. ب: و تستأثر منها المخصبه وتجتنب الباه ان تحدب الباه. ب: شاهدناك فطنا ذكيا.

CHAPTER IV

A Philological translation of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*

The symbolic epistle in which is described how to achieve the knowledge of Truth and that is the *Epistle of the bird*

INTRODUCTION Will anyone among my brothers lend me an ear that I may tell him one part of my burden? Perhaps he can lift from me some of my sorrow through sharing. In fact a friend cannot purify his brother from impurity unless he has preserved his own clarity from resentment in the time of difficulty. Where is such a sincere friend for you? When friendship has turned into trafficking in which one returns, when a need comes along and stops visiting as soon as the need is gone, a comrade is no longer visited unless a misfortune has occurred, and a friend will not be remembered unless a wish is remembered, except for the brothers of Truth who have been assembled by divine kinship and brought together by celestial closeness. They have observed the Truth with inner sight and cleansed their innermost secret from all stains of doubt. A society such as theirs will not be united except by the herald of a divine summons.

TESTAMENT O Brothers of Truth! Spread in the world and join together! Open your hearts to one another, and let each unveil his heart before his brother, so that you may instruct and perfect one another!

O Brothers of Truth! Conceal yourselves like hedgehogs when they Retract their heads and display your inner being and cover your appearance! For, I swear by God, that indeed concealment is for your outside and manifestation is for your innermost being.

O Brothers of Truth! Strip off your skins as the snakes do, and crawl like ants (worms). Be like scorpions whose weapons are in their tails, for the devil does not deceive Man except from behind! Take poison so that you may live! Love death in order that you may keep on living! Be ever in flight and never settle in a nest to which you return, for birds are captured in their nests! If lack of wings hinders you, get them by force and win! Indeed the best of vanguards are those who are strong in flight. Be like the ostriches, who swallow hot stones and vipers, who gulp down hard bones, and salamanders, who wrap themselves in flames with confidence! Be like bats who never appear by day! Indeed bats are the best of birds.

O Brothers of Truth! The most farsighted among people is the one who prepares himself for the day to come, and the most shortsighted of them is the one who fails to perfect himself.

O Brothers of Truth! It is not surprising that an angel avoids evil and a Beast commits a shameful deed, but the wonder is man who sins by running towards sexual desires and indeed by following or submitting to them damages his human form, and yet his nature has been enlightened by his intellect.

By the everlasting existence of God, an angel is lower in rank than a man who firmly resists his evil desires and does not depart from his way, and yet again a human being submissive to evil desires which appeal to him is lower than a beast.

STORY Let us revert to the beginning of the story. I said that a party appeared in order to hunt. They spread theirs snares, set up their net, scattered bait and hid themselves in the bushes. I was one of the flock of birds when they (the hunters) saw us, they whistled to draw our attention. We saw an agreeable amount of food and companions. No doubt entered our hearts nor suspicion kept us back from our goal. We hastened towards them and fell down into snares. Suddenly the rings closed around our necks, and the fetters entangled our wings, and the cords tightened around our feet. We hurried to move but what we gained was more distress. We consigned our bodies to non-being, and each of us busied himself with his own work, and we held our hearts empty of the sorrow over agreement. We were like this for a time, until we became used to the trap and became quiet in our cages.

Then one day, when I looked through the meshes of the nets, I saw a group of birds that had removed their heads and wings from the fetters and had come out of their cages, ready to fly. The remainders of the old straps were still tied to their feet, but it did not hinder them, for they were bound together through freedom, nor did it bother them, because their lives were purified. They reminded me of what I had forgotten and it spoiled all that to which I had become accustomed. It troubled me so that I was dissolved with grief or my soul departed from me with regret.

I called and cried out to them from behind my bars to come close and teach me how to find a solution which would result in the deliverance from what distressed me. They remembered the deceptions of the hunters and ran even farther away. I beseeched them in the name of old friendship, sustained companionship and preserved covenant. It touched their hearts and filled them with confidence and banished doubt from their breasts. They came to me and I asked them about their state. They related that they had suffered from the same affliction that I did and had been disappointed and accustomed to misfortune.

Then they cured me, the snare was removed from my neck and the fetters from my wings, and the door of the cage was opened. They told me to take advantage of the deliverance. I requested them to free also my leg from the hobble. They said "If we had the power we would have hastened first to release our own legs. How can the sick cure you?"

Arising I flew from the cage. They said to me "There are regions ahead of us which you must cross before you will be safe. Follow our tracks so that we may save you and guide you on the right way!" The flight took us between two flanks of the mountain of God, through a green and fertile, no a rather barren and devastated valley. We flew until we put its borders behind us. We crossed that region and reached the summit of the mountain. There in front of us were eight mountain-tops that eyes could not reach We said to one another to hasten and not to rest until we had passed these regions.

When we had put these difficulties behind us, we arrived at the sixth of the summits and alighted on the seventh. When we had come within the boundaries, one of us said to the other, "Perhaps it is time for you to rest, when indeed fatigue has weakened us and moreover there is a far distance between us and our enemies."

We saw that we could bestow upon our bodies some rest. For wandering in peace of mind leads to deliverance faster than carrying on in exhaustion.

We alighted on top of the mountain. The green gardens, which had within their interior walls meadows, fruit-bearing trees and streams of living water, captured one's sight with forms whose gracefulness puzzled the intellect and amazed the minds by their splendor. One heard songs of grief and delightful melodies and inhaled fragrances which surpassed the perfume of musk and fresh ambergris.

We gathered fruits and drank from springs and stayed there until we had cast off exhaustion.

Then one of us said to the other; "There is no trap like (having a feeling of) security nor any refuge like caution, nor is any fortress to protect one from suspicions. Indeed our stay in this place has taken so long that it may result in ignorance, and behind us our enemies chase us to find our halting place. Let's get up, move and emigrate from this region. It may be pleasant to abide here, it is even more pleasant (to reach) salvation."

We agreed upon departure and left the place. We landed on the eighth mountain whose summit was so high that it reached the highest heaven. On its slopes lived birds with, that I had never experienced sweeter melodies, more splendid colors, more graceful figures or more delightful companionship than theirs. When we took up residence in their

vicinity we enjoyed so much beneficence, affection, intimacy and assistance from them that we could not pay back the least of it. When we had established friendship with them, we informed them of what had happened to us. They showed sympathy and solicitude.

They said to us "Beyond this mountain there is a city in which the greatest King abides. If any unjustly treated person goes to him and puts his trust in Him, the burden will be lifted from him through His strength and protection." We relied on what they said and headed toward the city of the King until we alighted in his courtyard and awaited His permission. The new arrivals were made to enter. We were admitted to His palace and found ourselves in His courtyard which was so vast that no description could do it justice. When we had crossed it, before us a curtain was lifted disclosing a courtyard next to it so spacious and radiant that it made the first one seem little in our eyes.

MISSION Finally, we reached the chamber of the King. When the curtain was lifted before us we beheld the King in His beauty so radiant that our hearts were captured by Him. We were so amazed that it prevented us from making our complaint. He understood what had overcome us, and restored our strength by His kindness so that we were encouraged to speak to Him and narrate our story before Him. Then He said: "None is able to unbind the snares from your legs except those who tied them. I will send them a messenger so as to oblige them to satisfy you and remove the snares from your legs. Now depart and be satisfied."

Now we are on the path accompanied by the Messenger. My brothers are pressing around me, demanding that I tell them the story of the magnificence of the King. I shall describe Him with utmost concision. I said: "He is he King in whose possession is whatever picture of beauty unmingled with ugliness and perfection untroubled with defect you have in your mind. Every perfection in the true sense is accomplished in Him, and every defect even in the sense of metaphor is completely banished from Him. For His beauty is a face and his generosity a hand and whoever serves Him finds eternal bliss and whoever cuts himself off from Him loses this world and the next."

Which brother, when my story struck his ear, said; "I see that your intellect is touched and insanity has fallen upon you. No, by God, you did not fly, it is your reason that has flown away and you were not hunted rather your mind was hunted. How does Man fly or a bird speak?

It seems that yellow-bile has overflowed in your temperament or dryness has overcome your brain. Here is a remedy; "Drink a decoction of thyme dodder (epithymun); prepare for yourself baths in tepid and fresh

water and inhale the oil of nymphea, choose luxurious meals and avoid staying up late and reduce worries!

Since before this we knew you as a reasonable fellow among us. By God, who knows what is in our hearts, we are worried about you and on account of the disturbance of your state we are disturbed too."

ACQUITTAL The more they say the less I would accept and the worst of discourse is that which is wasted. Seeking help from God and acquittal (*barā'a*) (from me) unto people. Whoever professes otherwise would suffer loss. "And those who do wrong shall surely know by what overturning they will be overturned." (*Qur.* 26: 227)

CHAPTER V

A Commentary on the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* based *on* Ibn Sina's philosophical works and Sahlān Sāwī's Persian commentary

The *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* is a mystical epistle which consists of an introduction and four sections. In the introduction Ibn Sina tells of a pain which weighs heavily on his heart. In order to relieve this pain he is searching for brothers who would be willing to share it with him and there by show themselves to be his true brothers. At this point he provides a definition of the true brother. In the first section of the *Risāla* which can be designated as his testament (*waṣīyya*), Ibn Sina gives a sketch of the stations of the mystics in the form of a testament in allegorical terms. His aim is to instruct the brothers of purity or truth about how to prepare themselves for the way which begins with philosophy and wisdom and ends with gnosis and prophethood. The requisite behavior for each station is symbolized by an animal who is known for certain characteristics which exemplify each station. He relates the first station to the hedgehog and the last to the bat which he considers to be the symbol of the station or level of the angels.

In the second section, which can be called the story (*ḥadīṯ*), Ibn Sina illustrates the arguments which he has presented in the introduction and the first section. Here he discusses the cause of his pain in the form of an allegorical journey of the birds. He also explains who the true brother is, what characteristics the disciple and devotee should have and why, where the end of the way is and which level the seekers can expect to reach.

In the third section, which can be called the mission (*risāla*), he speaks of the level which the seekers will attain to and describes how some of the pain will be transformed into pleasure, rejoicing and happiness at the sight of the King.

In the fourth section, which is on acquittance (*barā'a*), he speaks of the conditions which will confront the wayfaring mystic at the end of the way. In the event that he succeeds in reaching the prophethood of the sages and fathoms worlds which are foreign to the eyes of others and then proceeds to describe them to those who do not have insight and who measure everything with their physical eyes, they will think he is insane and will not believe his words. He concludes that ultimately the pain will

be transformed into absolute happiness, when the spirit returns to its own familiar country and dwells in the circle of intimates of the great divine King but as long as the individual is not united with that world and the bonds of life are tied around his neck and feet, the pain will also press against his breast. At the end of the treatise, he is accompanied by the messenger of God and, while the intensity of the joy of the primary union is not there, his union with the other world has become easier to accomplish.

It is in the introduction of the *Risāla* that Ibn Sina wonders:

> "Will anyone among my brothers lend me an ear that I may tell him some part of my burden? Perhaps he may lift from me some of my sorrows through sharing. In fact a friend cannot purify his brother from impurity, unless he has preserved his own clarity from resentment in the time of difficulty."

In the rest of the *Risāla* Ibn Sina wishes to describe for his true brothers the pain which weighs heavily on his heart. When the author pronounces the words which describe the pain, the individual recognizes his own condition and both speaker and listener experience some relief from the pressure of the feelings which weigh on their minds and hearts. Thus the author seeks a brother who has grown from the same root and therefore experiences the same pain so that he can speak freely of his sorrow. The author and his brother will thereby accept it as an identical pain. As a result both of them will follow the way leading to union in one spirit with the strength of two bodies and will also seek other brothers with whom to share the burden of sorrow as the more they are the lighter it will become and the way to a remedy will be made easier.

At this point in the treatise Ibn Sina changes the subject from the idea of pain and goes on to give a definition of the true and faithful friend. In his opinion the true friend is the person who is steadfast in working towards his goals and does not let himself be swayed by the deceptions and temptations of the vegetable and animal souls; he knows that he does not need to be dominated by them but that they are tools in his control with which he can reveal the world of the human soul and its faculties and actualize them within himself. The whole inner being of such individuals is focused on the search for a cure for the pain. These sensitive individuals answer the summons of the Herald of the Unseen which means that they have insight into the awareness and intelligence which is current in the world of being at every moment and they are drawn to persons who have insights like theirs.

Ibn Sina considers those who have succeeded in attaining an insight into this awareness as his kin; they can be trusted and he can safely reveal his sorrow to them. He tells them that they should help one another to

become perfect and that each one should place his intellectual achievements at the disposition of the other. Likewise they must exercise the same amount of caution in concealing everything from the hypocritical friends who are their enemies.

When, in the introduction of the *Risāla,* Ibn Sina seeks acquittance and wishes to dissociate himself from his false friends, it could be suggested that in fact he is seeking to avoid the inner false friends such as lust and rage. He had thought that they were his friends and now he sees that they are friends of Satan and heathens whose goal is to destroy, kill and annihilate him. So far this is in perfect agreement with Ibn Sina's beliefs in the treatise of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, but the following passage reveals a new element in his discussion, namely, that repentance is the first step on the path of mysticism, a point on which Ibn Sina's ideas are similar to those of the mystics and many of the Ṣūfis. He understands repentance in the sense of becoming aware of the dark past and turning away from evil-doing and Satan. It is part of a complex of thoughts in which intellect and heeding the summons of God are embedded as well as the need to set out on a journey. The language of this section echoes the Sūra of Repentance; immediately after the first verse which is a proof of the acquittance by God and the Prophet before the polytheists, the faithful are given a set of instructions, "Journey freely in the land for four months; and know that you cannot frustrate the will of God, and that God degrades the unbelievers."(*Qur.* 9: 2)

At this point there is an invitation to the pilgrimage, because to set out on a pilgrimage is to traverse the world in order to meet God or see the city of God or the house of God. A related idea is that individuals seek refuge in the *ḥaram* of safety and experience it at the bottom of that safe valley which is the well-fortified fortress of God. Here it is possible by comparing the Sūra of Acquittance and the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* to establish that the pilgrimage in the *Qur'ān* is the earthly form of the journey of the birds in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. The birds fly in the direction of the east of the heavens and seek the city of the king and in that city they enter his chamber and experience unlimited light, absolute beauty and eternal perfection. Both journeys are journeys of pilgrimage. In a journey of pilgrimage one crosses the paths of deserts and then one makes seven revolutions around the house and also in the treatise of the birds the valley is seen bathed in light and then the seven heavens are also perceived as light.

A. The journey

In the section of the testament Ibn Sina exhorts his students: "O Brothers of Truth! Spread in the world and join together! Open your heart to one

another, and let each unveil his heart before his brother so that you may instruct and perfect one another!"

In explicating this section it should be said that Ibn Sina's intended meaning is to give the brothers the courage to undertake the journey which leads to the understanding of intellectual and spiritual truths. At this stage one can evoke the example of Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān who in introducing himself states that his profession is to tour the world in quest of knowledge of all the intellectual disciplines of the world.[1]

As is illustrated by his autobiography/biography, Ibn Sina always attached much importance to the actual physical journey. In his personal life he was always on his way somewhere and he believed that travel and the physical moving from place to place was extremely important in the spiritual growth of the individual.

Even before Ibn Sina it was common for students in the world of Islam to be going on continual journeys in quest of knowledge and to meet the most learned scholars in their fields of interest. Likewise there were many scholars who undertook to instruct interested students in the course of their continual voyages. One need only recall the biography of Ibn Sina where the scholar, 'Abdu'llāh Nātilī, was invited by Ibn Sina's father to live in their home during his stay in Buxārā so that he could teach philosophy and logic to Ibn Sina.[2]

Beside the students, the mystics considered the journey to be one of the principles of their instruction as it was seen to be of vital importance in spiritual growth. The idea of journeying and travel was so predominant in this culture that even the mystic in striving for purity of heart in order to see the light of God in the mirror of his heart was called the wayfarer or the traveler.

'Ibādī attributes the first mystical journey to Adam and defines it as a journey of mortification. He says that it is incumbent upon disciples who wish to travel the way of *taṣawwuf* to follow their father Adam in going on a journey the goal of which is to ask for forgiveness for the sins and misdeeds of their past.[3]

According to Abu'l-Qāsim al-Qušairī there are two kinds of journeys; the journey which is physical and the journey which consists of a transition from one attribute to another attribute. He says that thousands upon thousands travel with their bodies but only a few travel with their hearts.[4] Likewise many of the Ṣūfī masters, such as Abū 'Abdu'llāh al-Maġribī and Ibrāhīm ibn Adham, maintain that the whole of one's life is spent in journeying. Al-Qušairī, with the emphasis he places on the

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[1] Ibn Sina, *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān,* ed. Amīn, p. 43.

[2] Cf. Arberry, *Avicenna on Theology*, p. 9; Gohlman, *The Life of Ibn Sina*, p. 20 f.

[3] 'Ibādī, *Ṣūfī-nāma*, ed. Yusifī, p. 27

[4] Furūzānfarr, ed. *Tarjuma-yi risāla-yi qušairīya,* p. 487 f.

journey of the heart and his intention of showing that the one who only travels physically is not the true wayfarer, also illustrates that at his time journeying was very common among mystics and scholars.

'Ibādī, recalling the statement made by al-Qušairī, mentions that there are two kinds of journeys by virtue of the fact that there are two aims in journeying. One is the journey of the body which is accomplished within the world and its purpose is related to the physical and personal self. This is the journey which is accomplished with physical motion and treading the way. The other is the journey of the heart which is accomplished in the higher world and its purpose is to recognize the signs of the faculty of intellect and acquire a command of miracles and spirits and the unseen.[5] This journey takes place in meditation and the means of travel is insight and the seeing of the heart. He emphasizes that the human being is a traveler whose journey goes from non-being to existence and in the world of existence he travels until he reaches the resurrection. On this matter he writes, "The person who is undertaking a journey in wisdom and truth must also engage in an apparent journey through the climes of the world in order to learn about the wonders of God's creation."[6]

Hujwīrī has the following to say about the journey, "When a dervish chooses to travel, not to reside, he ought to observe the following rules. In the first place he must travel for God's sake, not for pleasure, and as he journeys outwardly, so he should flee inwardly from his sensual affections."[7]

In conclusion it was the opinion of Ibn Sina as well as a great many mystics and/or philosophers that the first principle of mortification is to set out on a journey, which involves uprooting attachments to the material life and uniting with the world of movement and current, that is the first state in becoming a bird.

B. Union

Ibn Sina believes that the travelers on the way of truth are brothers who are related by means of a divine kinship and whose ears are tuned to the inner summons. Thus when the Herald of the Unseen calls, they listen and set out to follow his voice. When they have set out on the way of oneness, they recognize one another as kindred spirits and band together. Their souls have become aware that they are related and that they see as though with one eye. As a result, matters of a more particular nature also

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[5] Cf. 'Ibādī, *Ṣūfī-nāma*, p. 160.

[6] 'Ibādī, *ibid.*, p. 249 ff.

[7] Hujwīrī, *Kašf ul-maḥjūb*, ed. Zhukovskiy, p. 449 f.

come to the attention of their united view, which leads them to unite in their common desire to reach the goal of union in the familiarity which the Herald of God has created.

Ibn Sina believes that the spiritual affinity of the souls is what has brought the prospective brothers together. He says that from the moment when the group has become constituted, the individuals, whom he designates as brothers in that they have grown from a common root, must act in purity towards one another and each of them must help the other grow by providing support from his own material or spiritual possessions. The perfection of the group will result in the perfection of the individual and vice versa. The whole purpose of banding together is to make it easier for the members of the group to acquire knowledge and serve the spirit and this is only possible if all the bodies operate in the service of one common soul. Thus they learn to observe the principle of solidarity and cooperation which was spoken of in the foregoing section.

C. The nine stations

In the section of the testament Ibn Sina advises: "O Brothers of Truth! Conceal yourselves like the hedgehogs when they retract their heads!" From the discussion above it can be concluded that the brothers of truth must cherish the human and spiritual truth which has been entrusted to them and protect it with their whole existence. Ibn Sina admonishes the brother of truth to behave like a hedgehog when setting out on the way, that is, when he comes face to face with the enemy he should retract his head and present a rough and sharp exterior which makes him unapproachable. In religious terminology the enemy is called Satan, who uses temptation to attract the individual to follow the desires of the bestial soul and ultimately brings about his annihilation and death. The enemy can also be an exterior person who prevents the brother of truth from following the way.

Ibn Sina recommends the brothers to withdraw into themselves because the only valid way of advancing in spiritual matters is by working with the inner being and strengthening the faculties connected with it.

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* Ibn Sina uses expression for describing the movement of the hedgehog in defending itself in order to describe the stance one must take in setting out on the spiritual way. The hedgehog pulls its head in close to the body, and this movement is used to symbolize how the mystic (*'ārif*) turns away from society and turns his attention inward to spiritual matters. The mystic turns to meditation and works with precision as he gets to know his own soul which is concealed from the exterior eye. The more the individual works at this with the eye

of insight the better he gets to know it. It becomes more brilliant and lustrous to him and in this state the mystic cares less for material, worldly, or sensual matters which were previously visible to his eye and as a result his exterior becomes more drab and less attractive.

The hedgehog is the symbol of being at the level at which the individual learns how to gain control over the natural soul. Ibn Sina's aim is to teach the mystic to avoid indulging in food at this level, as this is the best method by which the strength of the vegetable soul, which involves growth and production, can be brought under control. The mystic must remain concealed and keep his desire in check so that at the moment of confrontation with the enemy, which is hunger in this case, he will be unable to take in food. Thus in the view of Ibn Sina the hedgehog is clearly the symbol of the absence of intake of food.

In this context Ibn Sina says that if the natural soul has the upper hand, then one will naturally give in to one's appetite and will proceed to eat.[8] In the book of *al-Išārāt wa't-tanbīhāt* Ibn Sina discusses the problem of maintaining control over the vegetable and animal souls and demonstrates that one of the miracles which is attributed to mystics is this very ability to have control over the needs of the stomach. He points out, "Every time you hear of a mystic who abstains from eating little food during an extraordinary period show agreement in believing it and consider it to be among the known principles of nature!"[9] In the tenth class (*namaṭ*) of the chapter of the *Maqāmat al-'ārifin* he defines this ability in a scientific way: "Remember that every time the natural forces which are in us stop digesting materials of good quality and become occupied with the digestion and assimilation of undesirable materials, the stored desirable materials which are not fully digested, and he (the mystic) has no need for the transformation of what has already been digested."[10] (This means that when the individual stops eating, the body proceeds in a natural way to digest and assimilate materials which had been previously stored in the body, like the snake who waits a while before digesting material which he has swallowed earlier and during that time does not need food.)

Sahlān Sāwī, who has written the only extant commentary in Persian on the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*, takes the hedgehog as a symbol of the days of fasting and asceticism and refers to the discussion just quoted from the tenth class of *al-*Išārāṭ *wa't-tanbīhāt* as an illustration of Ibn Sina's belief that the mystic can live for a long time without food.

Sahlān Sāwī believes that the hedgehog is able to live without eating for at least forty days; during this period he not only becomes thin and

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[8] Ibn Sina, *Mi'rāj-nāma*, ed. Māyil-Heravī, 2nd. ed., p. 83.

[9] Ibn Sina, *Kitāb al-išārāt wa't-tanbīhāt*, ed. Forget, vol. I, p. 207.

[10] Ibn Sina, *ibid.*, p. 207.

lean but day by day learns how to lead a better life. Therefore he suggests that Ibn Sina uses the hedgehog as a symbol of the days during which the mystic is advised to refrain from eating in order to bring the vegetable soul under control in preparation for understanding the human levels.[11] In the *Rag-šināsī* Ibn Sina fully explains in scientific terms the nature of this matter, although he uses the snake instead of the hedgehog as an example.[12]

According to Sahlān Sāwī, Ibn Sina has two ideas he wishes to convey with the symbol of the hedgehog. One is training the vegetable soul so that the individual will exercise control over it and the second is the need to remain concealed from the eyes of the enemy for a period of time for example, the forty-day retreat during which one is in seclusion.

In order to complete his days of seclusion more easily the mystic is advised to avoid frequenting unacceptable or undesirable company. Expressed more drastically, this means that he should find a means of making people flee from him. Here a similarity is established between the hedgehog and the mystic as both are expected to present a harsh and rough exterior. The hedgehog covers his soft exterior with sharp thorns and the mystic masks his inner sensitivities and conceals his exterior with a rough cloak. This rough garment appears offensive to some people and thereby shows itself to be a means for him to make people stay away from him and allows him to distinguish hypocritical friends from true friends. As a result in the absence of the former one may serve the latter which consequently leads to the elevation of his state of being.

At this point it is interesting to ask exactly what Ibn Sina's opinion is about the patched garment of union. Ibn Sina has always been considered to belong to those scholars who paid more attention to the inner aspect of a question than to the exterior. Therefore it is not possible to say with certainty that he meant the patched garment used by the Ṣūfis. Ibn Sina himself is famous for dressing in the opposite way. On this matter, Ibn Sina says that "the mystics (*'ārifīn*) have different states and sometimes they choose the better ones but it sometimes happens that they even prefer a bad odor rather than a good one."[13] Thus it is most probable that the donning of the patched garment related to the station of the hedgehog symbolizes an internal process such as that of uprooting the hypocritical friends and avoiding evil people in order to be able to set out on the way of truth. This enables one to join the true brothers and to follow the way of the people of truth. This only happens if the individual liberates himself from the captivity of his vegetable and animal souls by means of mortification, exercises and isolation. Seclusion and

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[11] Cf. Spies and Khatak, *Three Treatises on Mysticism*, p. 58 f.

[12] Ibn Sina, *Rag-šināsī*, ed. Miškāt, p. 9 ff.

[13] Ibn Sina, *Kitāb al-išārāt*, p. 206.

investigation of the inner states are the first steps on the way. In this regard in the section of the testament Ibn Sina exhorts: "Display your inner being and cover your appearance! For I swear by God that indeed manifestation is for your innermost being and concealment is for your outside."

The pseudo-*ḥadīṯ* of the Prophet, "Indeed the one who knows himself knows the Lord,"[14] has always attracted the attention of the Ṣūfīs and mystic philosophers. 'Ibādī says on this subject that the only way to knowledge of the Creator is by learning to know the soul first. He quotes the *ḥadīṯ* above in the context of his reasoning that "God has placed the truth of all the created beings in the soul of man," and follows it by the question, "and do you not look into your souls?"[15]

When Ibn Sina admonishes the brothers to "display your inner being!" he means that one should establish it as the focal point of attention and provide it with all its needs and make it visible and when he says, "conceal the exterior!" he means that one should not pay any attention to it and act as though it were of no importance. Sahlān Sāwī corroborates this point when he says "Make the interior exterior and the exterior interior!" This statement has two aspects. One involves giving superiority and domination to the active faculty of the soul, which is interior (*bāṭīn*), so as not to detach from the body, and the other, is conceal these physical faculties, which means to put them (the faculties of the animal and vegetable souls) under the control of the faculties of reason. In this regard Sahlān Sāwī interprets Ibn Sinas text as follows: keeping the exterior concealed means keeping away from people and remaining in seclusion from them. Making visible the interior means that one should remove the veil from the secrets of the knowledge of one's inner being in the presence of the brothers with whom one shares solidarity.[16]

(I have reconstructed the word used in this context as *qaba'* from which *yaqbba'u* and *yataqabba'* are constructed. This is the Arabic *q-b-'* which means pulling the head down or withdrawing the head close to the body and becoming invisible and is said of the movements of the hedgehog when threatened. Mehren's text has *yaqnna'u* from the root *qana'* meaning "to mask, wear a veil". In the manuscript upon which Spies based his edition as well as in the commentary by Sahlān Sāwī the sentence runs *taqna'u kamā yataqna'a'l-qanāfiḏ* but the Persian translation has, "Pull in your head just as the hedgehog pulls his head in."[17] This translation, which appears to be dependent on that of

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[14] Utas, *Ṭarīq ut-taḥqīq*, p. 178.

[15] 'Ibādī, *Ṣūfī-nāma*, p. 167.

[16] Spies and Khatak, *Three Treatises*, p. 59 f.

[17] Spies and Khatak, *ibid.*, p. 58

Axsīkaṭī, differs a little from the translation by Suhrawardī. The latter translation has, "Withdraw just as the hedgehog in the desert withdraws within himself."[18] These are the only two extant translations of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* into Persian and both of them refer to the hedgehog's manner of pulling the head in close to the body.)

In the beginning of the section of the testament Ibn Sina addresses the brothers of truth and tells them to "pull your head in like the hedgehog," which means that one should become attentive to the inner states and become engaged in inner matters. In the next sentence he says "lift the veil from your inner secrets", which means that one should learn to know oneself and reveal oneself like the mystic who conceals his head in the garment and becomes involved in the revelation of the world of the Unseen. In fact the words of Ibn Sina are easy to understand and one can ask how all the difficulties of interpreting the text arose. The reason is most probably due to the fact that in the past the dots distinguishing the letters were not added to the text. Thus any copyist of the treatise who was not all that familiar with the text could have added the distinguishing points to the letters in correspondence with what he believed to be the correct words. Therefore at some point in history the more generally used verb *qana'* 'to veil or to mask' replaced the somewhat technical term *qaba'* used only to describe the movement of the head of the hedgehog when threatened.

Regarding the attending to the inner being, in the same section, Ibn Sina admonishes: "O Brothers of Truth! Strip off your skins as the snakes do." In explicating the symbol of the snake and the shedding of his skin, Sahlān Sāwī says that Ibn Sina means that this is the soul and body of man and that the individual must uproot those attachments of the body which are dearest to him and leave them like a skin behind him, so that he can go on to a new level of life. Thus Ibn Sina is of the opinion that the traveler of the way must be continually in a state of uprooting attachments from the heart, especially those of emotional character, which can distract the attention of the intellectual faculties. When the heart has become free from attachments the strength of the intellectual faculty is freed and can devote all its energy to intuition and revelation.[19]

Ibn Sina, who employs the symbolism of animals to illustrate his philosophical ideas, in order to prepare the mystics to attend to the inner being, exhorts "crawl like ants (worms)!" Sahlān Sāwī interprets the worm or ant as the symbol of causing little trouble and remaining concealed. At this station the individual must show that he has no need or desire for any thing which in one or another manner holds him back from the way of truth. He sees his behavior as having a basis in the

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[18] Spies and Khatak, *ibid.*, p. 39.

[19] Spies and Khatak, *ibid.*, p. 61.

Qur'ānic verse from the Sūra of Salvation, "those who walk in the earth modestly" (*Qur.* 25: 63)[20] Al-Hāšimī al-Bağdādī interprets the ant or worm as the symbol of union with different levels of knowledge and wisdom and maintains that it is not possible to go on to another level until the individual has left his present level behind.[21]

It is also possible to interpret the symbol of the worm as not taking pride in one's life and of considering it to be of little worth. The mystic knows that however much he advances to the different spiritual stations on the way of the journey, it will always be necessary to smother the voice of the bestial soul because it is continually urging him to attend to personal needs. Furthermore, it seeks constantly to display the faculties of the mystic in the sight of others so as to arouse the admiration of the general public and cultivate pride in the mystic. Naturally, ostentation and manifestation of his gain will bring about his spiritual fall and prevent him from gaining insight into higher worlds. In other words, the mystic should be like the worm and avoid every kind of ostentation, hypocrisy or putting on airs, because it is only then that he will be able to free the faculty of his soul from restraints caused by the needs of the body and entirely give himself up to spiritual matters.

The station of the scorpion is the next station that Ibn Sina takes into consideration in the section of the testament. In this connection he says: "Be like scorpions whose weapons are in their tails, for the devil does not deceive Man unless from behind!"

According to Ibn Sina the mystic at this level must be fully alert like the scorpion in order to prevent all dangers concealed from the eyes of ordinary individuals from finding a way of entry. In this way Satan will not be able to deceive him with passionate and wrathful desires hidden under a pleasant appearance. The mystic should always be ready to see through the ruses of the enemy, because when he is observant there is less possibility of his being struck by a dagger from behind by the enemy who presents a friendly face. Being armed in one's back is a symbol of being wary of all that is concealed from sight. He is even able to strengthen himself by maintaining a firm opposition to the enemy. Mystics at this level are said to wage war against the carnal self.

Sahlān Sāwī defines Satan as consisting of the faculties of imagination and illusion and the faculty of anger and passion which holds people back from knowledge and desire of salvation and freedom.[22] The *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* consider Satan to be the faculty of rage and passion and the imperious soul (*nafs al-ammāra*).[23]

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[20] Spies and Khatak, *ibid.*, p. 61 f.

[21] Cf. Ms. Ahmet III 3268(3), Topkapī Sarayī, Istanbul.

[22] Spies and Khatak, *Three Treatises*, p. 62.

[23] Cf. *Rasā'il ixwān aṣ-ṣafā,* vol. II, p. 344.

Sahlān Sāwī says that the meaning of the front and back of a person are symbols of the two faculties of the rational soul of the human being, that is, the faculty of learning and the agentive faculty. When the agentive faculty is completely involved with the corporal and practical faculties, its duty is to watch continually over morals so as to influence them in a good way. As a result its attention is directed toward what is behind and it is vigilant like one on guard duty carrying arms, so that Satan cannot run behind the mystic and overwhelm him with the strength of passion and anger. The other faculty is knowledge and its attention is directed forwards toward the exalted world of the angels.[24]

Al-Baġdādī says in discussing the weapon of the scorpion and directing one's attention forward and backward that Ibn Sina's intended meaning is that evil deeds and passion, like the weapon of the scorpion, belong to the back of the individual. He adds that Satan chases man from behind and inflicts harm on him. Furthermore evil doings belong to the sphere of passion and do not come from the side of intelligence. He maintains that every human being has a front and a back. His front is his breast which is the seat of his intelligence and his back is the place of passion. The reason that the weapon is kept on the back is to help the mystic ward off attacks of passion.[25]

In summary the scorpion represents the station of complete awareness and continual readiness. This state involves never resting or relaxing the attention of the corporal faculties even as they are being transformed into spiritual faculties. At this level the individual is prepared to do battle at any moment and the object of the battle is to avoid being harmed by enemies who claim to be one's friends.

It is again in the same section that Ibn Sina says: "Take poison so that you may live. Love death in order that you may keep on living!" Sahlān Sāwī interprets the drinking of poison, as a symbol of keeping the faculty of passion and rage subdued. For the human being this is equivalent to drinking poison because if he has become aware he knows he must keep away from the pleasures of the world and that by rooting out these attachments the door of the spiritual world and wisdom will be opened to him. Sahlān Sāwī considers the development of restraint to be the victory of the intellectual faculties of the soul over the corporal faculties, the animal and vegetative souls.[26] Also al-Baġdādī emphasizes that the meaning of swallowing poison is the killing of passion and the giving of life to the intellectual faculties.[27]

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[24] Cf. Spies and Khatak, *Three Treatises*, p. 62 f.

[25] Cf. Ms. Ahmet III 3268(3), f. 27a.

[26] Cf. Spies and Khatak, *ibid.*, p. 64.

[27] Cf. Ms. Ahmet III 3268(3), f. 28a.

Ibn Sina holds that the mystic must advance on the way in the opposite direction of his corporal desires, because they will lead him to temporary pleasures and pain and ultimately to the exhaustion of human strength and death. The person who learns this lesson and strengthens his faculties will gradually develop the power to overcome his weaknesses. Naturally, in the eyes of those around him he appears to die along with his selfishness and passion, but in reality he reaches full strength.

With patience in adversity the individual strengthens his human faculties and leaves the prison of habit and nature step by step he becomes more and more familiar with his faculties and moves farther away from death. The aim of drinking poison is to embrace difficulties voluntarily with the aim of acquiring power, authority and ability. In this regard Ibn Sina says one should love death and welcome it and make it one's friend and in this way surmount the greatest restraining force. Man's greatest fear is death and because of it the individual continually keeps himself enclosed in the prison of nature and weakness. If the individual learns not to fear death and thereafter tests his strength, he will see how it increases. Death will reveal its secret to him and this will lead to the transformation of the inner being of the mystic. Otherwise the largest cause of non-being in humans is the fear of non-being, but by overturning this law and gaining knowledge and wisdom the individual will acquire the secret of life.

As a result the individual must die to his instincts, and bestial pleasures, so that the child of his soul can be born in his inner being. In this way he can begin to lead a spiritual life despite the existence of constraints on his life and the continuing presence of bonds on his feet.

Encouraging the mystics to live like a bird, Ibn Sina says in the same section: "Be ever in flight and never settle in a nest to return to! For birds are captured in their nests. If lack of wings hinders you, get them by force and win. Indeed the best of vanguards are those who are strong in flight."

Ibn Sina says that after experiencing the death of bestial pleasures and the birth of spiritual life the brother of truth begins to fly, and from this point forward he frees himself more and more from corporal restrictions, as he advances from level to level in the direction of the final opening out of his wings.

With the lesson of the station of the bird he means that the individual should avoid the constraining bonds of familial attachments. Ibn Sina himself obeyed this rule and the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* also recommended devotees at the higher levels not to have a family and to avoid family ties. Thus the individual should strive to be light like the bird with wings who fly with nothing to prevent him from advancing. On avoiding emotional and familial attachments 'Ibādī emphasizes that the mystic should remain

solitary and live without any worldly possessions including a wife or even pride over good behavior. He recounts the following *ḥadīṯ* about the prophet. A man came up to him claiming to be a solitary (*mujarrad*) and the prophet asked whether he had a wife and a house to which he would return and live with that woman. The man answered in the affirmative, and the prophet did not count him to be solitary because of those things.[28]

Sahlān Sāwī considers 'flying' to consist of the acceptance of blessings from the angels and the cutting off of attachments to whatever is an impediment to the acquisition of human happiness. He considers building a nest to be the symbol of finding comfort in defective things and a sign that the individual gives priority to the faculty of the animal soul over that of the agent soul (*nafs-i fā'ila*). He maintains that the process in which the bird perfects his wings and uses them to fly represents the perfection of the soul in understanding spiritual matters and acquiring the contemplative sciences.[29] Al-Baġdādī takes the nest as a symbol of the body of the human being, and to remain in the nest is a symbol of love of the body whose desires cause constraints which are a hindrance in the salvation of the individual.[30]

Sahlān Sāwī comments on why it is necessary for the bird to steal wings if he lacks them. He says that to grow wings means that the individual acquires the knowledge, revelation and intuition through which he receives awareness and advances on the spiritual way without an intermediary, but to steal them means to study the sciences from persons who have already reached the level of intuition. Sahlān Sāwī follows Ibn Sina in maintaining that on this way it is necessary to employ one's intellectual faculties to the fullest extent and if revelation and intuition are not possible then the knowledge which will bring the spreading of wings should be secured by study.

In the section of the testament Ibn Sina illustrates another station of the mystics by the symbolic of the ostrich. In this regard he

says "Be like ostriches who swallow hot rocks!" In the animal world the ostrich is known for its double nature. On the one hand it has wings but does not fly, however it can run at an extremely high speed. The other is that, like other birds, it eats pebbles or rocks in order to digest its food (naturally small birds eat very fine sand while the ostrich swallows larger rocks which have been heated by the desert sun.) The swallowing of the heated rocks of the desert is an image constructed by Ibn Sina to convey the idea of the next level to strive for on the way of the mystics.

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[28] 'Ibādī, *Ṣūfī-nāma*, p. 130 f.

[29] Cf. Spies and Khatak, *Three Treatises*, p. 64.

[30] Cf. Spies and Khatak, *ibid.*, p. 64.

The ostrich can be a symbol of the level at which the individual belongs partly to the world and partly to heaven. Ibn Sina can have meant that although the wings of the individual do not have the capacity to bear the body upwards at this level he should not refrain from trying. He should swallow his anger and rage which are like a mouthful of fiery stones and allow them to burn the whole of his interior and thereby overcome this inability to fly. At the end when he has expelled the ashes of all that is burnt he will develop wings and become a bird. In other words instead of pouring out his anger on the non-being of the world he should direct it to his interior and let it burn the filth which prevents him from opening out wings with which to reach illumination and lightness. Ibn Sina believes that at this level if the anger is real then the mystic must make it burn his interior.

Sahlān Sāwī says in his commentary, when emphasizing the likeness between the hot stones and anger, that when the individual is in a state of anger he should reflect and think about the final result and by this means desist from what he had intended to do.[31] Al-Baġdādī considers the swallowing of the hot stones to be a symbol of patience in the face of the adversity which the individual meets with on the way of training the bestial faculty. Also in the *Qur'ān* it is emphasized that one should swallow one's anger.

The station of the viper is the next level which Ibn Sina presents in the section of the testament. He says: "(Be like) vipers who gulp down hard bones!"

Eating bones is the symbol of experiencing death because the bones are in reality the remains of a carcass. There is no food which is harder than bones and the viper appears in the text of Ibn Sina as a consumer and softener of the bones of the dead. It is a symbol of the level at which the individual must turn his passionate energy to the inside instead of turning it to the outside. He must recognize that on each occasion when he has turned it to the exterior he has brought death a little closer. Like the eater of carrion he must engage in the softening and dissolution of the passions with all their hardness in order to reach life and longevity. Eating bones is a symbol of consigning the body to difficult and oppressive works and it is essentially a movement against the pleasures of the imperious soul (*nafs al-ammāra*), because the soul, which is always in accordance with the natural law, calls the individual to the easy and comfortable life. Meanwhile the spiritual way is full of twists and turns which demand sacrifices from the soul.

Sahlān Sāwī says that Ibn Sina likens the hard and filthy bones to passion.[32] Al-Baġdādī says that the author's intention is to show that

[31] Cf. Spies and Khatak, *ibid.*, p. 66.

[32] Cf. Spies and Khatak, *ibid.*, p. 66.

cutting off the desires of the soul is difficult and that the person who endures will reach salvation.[33]

In conclusion the viper, which belongs to the species of the snake, is a symbol of the soul. At this level the mystic must impel his soul to perform difficult tasks. They consist of turning the death-bringing faculty of passion to the interior and transforming it into a spiritual and divine faculty.

The salamander represents another station in the section of the testament. Ibn Sina exhorts: "Be like the salamanders who wrap themselves in flames with confidence!"

In explaining the station of the salamander in the system of thought of Ibn Sina one can comment that he uses it as a symbol to emphasize the importance of complete sexual abstinence. If the mystic reaches the higher stations but has not attained abstinence in this matter he can easily commit a sin which would destroy his spiritual life.[34] The devotee who has reached the station of the salamander does not fear either the accusations of people or the reproaches of his own reproaching soul (*nafs al-lawwāma*), because, at this stage, he knows that his existence has become pure. He affirms this purity by undergoing the test of going through fire. For example, in the *Qur'ān* Abraham is tried by fire so that the truth or falsity of his claims can be established (*Qur.* 21: 68; 29: 24). In the *Šāh-nāma* Siāywuš is tried by fire in order to confirm whether or not there are any grounds for the accusations against him concerning Sūdāba and he is shown to be innocent.[35]

It is natural that the mystic meets with many hardships at this level but when he has surmounted the disturbances and temptations of the soul he can go forward with tranquility in the face of all hardships and continue without fear of death because he knows that God is his support. Sometimes the mystic must enter into the fire in order to confirm whether or not he has reached the level of the salamander. Many of the mystics embraced the fire as a real command and actually entered into the flames. For others the fire was a symbol of tackling spiritual hardships with the aim of testing the soul. It seems to be the belief of Ibn Sina that at this level the mystic has the power of performing miracles in the sense that if he were to enter into the flames he would not be burned. It is also

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[33] Cf. Ms. Ahmet III 3268(3), f. 28b.

[34] The story of Šaix Ṣan'ān, which is first mentioned by Muḥammad Ġazzālī and then by 'Aṭṭār in the *Manṭiq uṭ-ṭair,* is a good illustration of this concept. Šaix Ṣan'ān, in spite of all his greatness and numerous followers, falls, into the trap of love for a Christian girl. He commits all kinds of deeds prohibited by religion in order to achieve union with her. Then one day he is made aware of his fall through the pleas of one of his disciples and he abandons the Christian girl and accompanying impurities and advances on the way to Makka. Cf. 'Aṭṭār, *Manṭiq uṭ-ṭair,* ed. Maškûr, pp. 77-102.

[35] Firdausī, *Šah-nāma,* vol. III, p. 33 f.

at this level that the mystic should be purified by the fire and can put the hell of his soul behind him, reaches paradise and becomes illuminated in the same way as Abraham when he is tried in the fire of paradise. It is stated in the *Qur'ān* that at the command of God the fire becomes cold and health-giving for him and in the *Qiṣaṣ ul-anbīyā* it is written that in the midst of the fire a paradise was created for Abraham. "Then in the midst of the flames a throne appeared and Abraham sat upon it; a pool of water appeared before him and narcissuses and flowers grew in circle upon circle around the throne and he was brought the robes of paradise and no one was able to go there for three days."[36]

The station of the bat is the last level in the section of the testament. In order to introduce the station Ibn Sina suggests: "Be like bats who never appear by day! Indeed bats are the best of birds." When the individual is freed from the temptations of the imperious soul (*nafs al-ammāra*) and the purity of his inner being has been tried in the fire and found to be refined and his animal soul is no longer a restraining attachment, his existence becomes light like a bird and he grows wings. Ibn Sina calls this the level of the angels or the level of becoming a bat. The individual comes out of the fire and is united with light, and union with light is synonymous with the level of the angels or the station of the spirit. At this level the individual finds his way in the darkness of this world. Al-Baġdādī considers this level to be that of pure independence and says that this means that the individual is no longer deceived by this world and its glitter and everything which appears beautiful to him, but has become like the bat who flees from the sun.[37] Sahlān Sāwī considers the bat to be the symbol of the sage and says that just as the bat does not have the form of a bird but has the faculties of birds, likewise, by disciplining his soul, man can become endowed with the character of the angels even though he does not have the form of angels.[38]

In the section of the testament Ibn Sina concludes: "O Brothers of Truth! The most far-sighted among people is the one who prepares himself for the day to come and the most short-sighted of them is the one who fails to perfect himself " At the end of the testament Ibn Sina says that the person with most insight is the person who is concerned about his own future and who engages in cultivating the house of his soul by exercising abstention and embracing learning. Likewise in the opinion of Ibn Sina the person who is weakest and most lacking in ideas is the one who drowns himself in the transient passions of the animal soul and is negligent of the work of bringing perfection to his soul. He compares the animal and spiritual dimensions of the human being and discusses the

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[36] Al-Nišābūrī, *Qiṣaṣ ul-anbīyā*, p. 52.

[37] Cf. Ms. Ahmet III 3268(3), f. 28b.

[38] Cf. Spies and Khatak, *Three Treatises*, p. 68.

person who, despite his success in reaching the station of the soul and light or level of the angels, still remains a prisoner of the animal world considers him to be lower than the animals. If, however, he succeeds in finding the way of flight from the prison of the world of nature, which is the same as being a prisoner in the hand of death, he will gradually reach the station of the angels which is the proper station for the human being.

It should be noted that I have read *a'nā* while Mehren in his edition reads the same word as *aġnā* which gives the meaning 'the richest'. Of course this is a possible sense in the context of the whole sentence but in relation to the word *afšal* which means 'the weakest' it is irrelevant. In Arabic *a'nā* is an attribute used to describe a person who observes a command with attention and exactitude; it expresses the purport of the whole sentence which is about exactitude in the work of tomorrow and is the opposite point of inattentiveness and laziness. *Aġnā* and *afšal* are not antonyms but *a'nā* and *afṣal* are.[39]

The conclusion which can be drawn at the end of the 'testament' *(waṣīyya)* is that Ibn Sina proposes nine stations which are symbolized by the hedgehog, the snake, the worm, the scorpion, the bird, the ostrich, the viper, the salamander and the bat. These nine stations are equal to the number of mountains which the birds in the story by Ibn Sina in the same treatise cross in order to reach the city of the Great King and they are also equal to the number of the stations of the mystics as described in the *al-Išārāt wa't-tanbīhāt*.

D. The imprisonment of the soul

The section of the story (*ḥadīṯ*) begins with this statement: "Let us revert to the beginning of the story! I said that a party appeared in order to hunt, they spread their snares, set up their net and scattered bait and hid themselves in the bushes." The hunter in the tale of the birds is a necessary actor in the events which precede their awakening. He knows that the birds will soon appear in the skies and he is familiar with their weak point he knows how to lure them into his snare.

Before going into a more detailed analysis of the parts of the story it is necessary to recall that the presence of the hunter on the scene reminds us of the tale of Adam and Eve in Paradise. It says in the *Qur'ān* that the angel, Iblīs, existed in Paradise before Adam. He takes it upon himself to have Adam and Eve driven out of Paradise (*Qur.* 2: 30). Likewise in the present story the hunter knows that he will be able to keep the bird in the

[39] Heath translates this sentence in the following manner, "Come, Brothers of Truth! The richest of men is he who dares the morrow." Heath, "Disorientation and reorientation in Ibn Sina's Epistle of the Bird," *Intellectual Studies on Islam*, ed. Massaoui and Moreen, p. 165.

prison of nature with the grain which represents both multiplicity and the vegetable soul including the faculty of nourishment and generation of the species.

It is important to note here that Ibn Sina clearly states in the *Risāla-yi nafs* and other treatises that he does not consider the soul to have existed before the body. He believes that when a being is created by God, a soul which is suitable to the composition (*mizāj*) of that body is immediately attached to it. He considers that the soul and body come into being simultaneously but that if anteriority or posteriority were possible the existence of the body would still be prior, because God grants it a soul which is compatible with it. In this context he points out: "The soul of man is new with the new creation of the body."[40] In the same passage he speaks of the multiplicity of souls in one person (i. e. vegetable, animal and human) and the oneness of the soul of all human beings (i. e. the individual human soul which participates in the Universal Intellect) as well as reincarnation (*tanazzul*) and he emphasizes: "Thus it becomes obvious that the soul of man does not exist before the body but when a body appears it is joined with a soul which is suitable to its particular spiritual composition by the Bestower of forms in order to organize the body."[41]

Regarding the concept of the fall, in the section of the story, Ibn Sina tells:

> "I was one of the flock of birds when they (the hunters) saw us, and whistled to draw our attention. We saw an agreeable amount of food and companions. No doubt entered our hearts nor suspicion kept us back from our goal. We hastened towards them (the nets) and fell down into snares. Suddenly the rings closed around our necks, and the fetters entangled our wings, and the cords tightened around our feet."

Among the angels Satan was the only one who refused to bow down before Adam because he considered himself to be superior to Adam, (*Qur.* 2: 34). Likewise it is Satan who lures Adam and Eve into eating the fruit of the tree or the grain of wheat which leads to their being expelled from Paradise (*Qur.* 2: 34; 7: 20-24).

In the tale of the treatise the hunter, who symbolizes the natural faculty and legality, lies in wait, and the snare, which represents the body, has been laid out on the ground, while the bird-soul blithely hurries in their direction enticed by thoughts of the pleasure of eating the grain.

The majority of the commentators take the bird to be the symbol of the soul. Al-Bagdādī says explicitly that the bird is the soul and the snare and the bonds are a metaphor for his passion which dominate him. In the

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[40] Ibn Sina, *Risāla-yi nafs*, ed. 'Amīd, p. 52.

[41] Ibn Sina, *ibid.*, ed. 'Amīd, p. 54

Qaṣīdat al-'aynīyya attributed to Ibn Sina the soul is depicted as a dove which has fallen from the world above and has been captured in a trap, as symbol of the body which antedates, or coincides with the appearance of the soul:

" Out of her lofty home she hath come down
Upon thee, this white dove in all the pride
Of her reluctant beauty; veiled is she
From every eye eager to know her, though
In loveliness enshrouded radiant. "[42]

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* Ibn Sina lets a bird flying with a flock of birds represent the level of the potential intellect (*hayūlā.*). It appears to be unaware of the Other World, the level at which all the faculties have been engraved on the nature of the individual but have not yet advanced from potentiality to actuality. It is the destiny of the soul, in which the faculties progress from potentiality to actuality, that it be consigned to the body or snare, grain and bond of the hunter. This means that the soul must separate itself from its source where it is in union with pure wisdom and perfect light and descend to the arena of the earth or matter or the world of forms. There it gradually develops the faculties engraved on it in the world of sediment and darkness, which is the metaphor for the material world. This gradual appearance takes place in much the same way that a film appears as it is being developed in the darkroom of a photographer.

At this level Ibn Sina considers the bird-soul to be the captive prisoner of the hunter of nature. The imprisoned individual sees no one or thing except himself and his own interests. In the words of the *Risāla* he says, "we forgot all about our condition and we got used to the fetters and we trusted the cages." Ibn Sina says that when the soul is bound to the body it is required to do the bidding of the body. This condition prevents the soul from attaining happiness. The body gradually neglects the soul more and more as it becomes absorbed in its corporal needs. If this condition continues it will cause the soul to forget its happiness.[43]

It is at this moment that Man or the Bird or "I" (Ibn Sina recounts the tale of the birds in the first person singular), who represents the human race and who has a human soul even though this has been forgotten, is jolted out of his sleep and unawareness by the sight of the free birds who symbolize the sages and scholars. In the opinion of Ibn Sina these birds or sages are the heralds of God who awaken individuals from their sleep and gather them around themselves as brothers in circles under their guidance.

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[42] Arberry, *Avicenna*, p. 77.

[43] Ibn Sina, *Dāniš-nāma (ṭabī'īyāt)*, ed. Miškāt, p. 128 f.

In this section of the treatise Ibn Sina lifts the veil concealing the pain of which he spoke at the beginning of the treatise and for which he sought a true brother who would agree to share it with him. Here he demonstrates by means of the free birds the helping role of the true brothers and their ability to share his pain and experience as a captive in prison. In reality it is by travelling the way of knowledge and wisdom that they are able to leave the prison. Here the author exemplifies his belief that the only way of salvation from the prison of the unawareness of nature and captivity at the hand of the hunter-Satan, symbol of the bestial soul, is for the individual to develop the potentiality of the faculties of the human soul and to strengthen himself on the way of wisdom.

In order to clarify Ibn Sina's view of pain it is necessary to refer to the book of *al-Išārāt wa't-tanbīhāt*. Ibn Sina says that as long as the individual is a captive of his body and is preoccupied with its needs and attachments he will not have an ardent desire to perfect himself and because his soul is defective it does not suffer anguish. However, once it finds an opportunity of being released from the tyranny of the body, everything that has been blocking the insight of the individual is withdrawn and he sees his own perfect form and desires it ardently. When he comprehends that he is in a situation where he cannot reach it, his whole existence is filled with pain and suffering.[44] This can be compared with the situation of the bird in the cage of Ibn Sina.

Thus the shared pain comes from being held captive in the dark prison of the bestial soul far away from the source of light, knowledge and wisdom. In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* the author borrows the voice of the bird imprisoned in the cage, when he testifies to the other birds how all the little pleasures of his life have been transformed into pure pain so that he wants to die. He learns to fly with his cage as he gradually nears the source of perfection. Then as long as he goes on learning and strengthening the human faculty, the measure of his pain decreases and his pleasure increases; the more he learns the happier he becomes.

Ibn Sina speaks in detail of this pain and of spiritual pleasure in the book of *al-Išārāt wa't-tanbīhāt*. In the chapter on the ninth class (*namaṭ*) in the *Maqāmat al-'ārifīn* he says that when bodily impurity has been removed from the abstentious mystics and they have become separated from their constraints and hindrances, they go to the world of holiness and happiness, where they live in the highest perfection and experience great pleasure. It is interesting to note here that in fact the birds of Ibn Sina fly with their cages and that their journey is not a journey of the soul at the time of the death of the body. Ibn Sina indicates with this symbol that the journey of the ascension of the soul refers to the understanding of inner meaning. In the journey of death the bird has no

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[44] Ibn Sina, *Kitāb al-išarāt*, ed. Forget, vol. I, p. 194 f.

need of the body and therefore he abandons the cage and leaves as is discussed in *Risālat al-ma'ād* and illustrated by the *Qaṣīdat al-'aynīyya:*

"And if the tangled mesh impeded her,
The narrow cage denied her wings to soar
Freely in heaven's high ranges, after all
She was a lightning-flash that brightly glowed."[45]

But in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* the individual needs his cage because he is still alive and his journey is not a journey of return (*ma'ād*) but a journey of ascension (*mi'rāj*). He wants to acquire human perfection and activate the abilities of the faculties of his intellect. It is in this context that the bird learns first to free his head, the symbol of his intellectual and human faculties, from the snare and then his wings, that is it is only when he wants to acquire wings that he will find his intellectual faculties within reach. Al-Bağdādī and Sahlān Sāwī both emphasize that what the bird learns from the birds is the intellectual branches of knowledge.[46]

It is interesting to recall here that Ibn Sina divided the faculties of the intellectual, human soul, which he calls the intellect, into two parts. These are called the practical faculty (*'aql-i 'amalī*) and the theoretical faculty (*'aql-i nażarī*). In the opinion of Ibn Sina the function of the practical faculty is to engage in good morals, understanding of the mysteries and invention of arts. This level is called the practical intelligence and the other is the faculty of knowledge, which is called the theoretical intelligence, and its function is to understand the meanings and intellectual forms.

Ibn Sina divides the theoretical intelligence into four levels consisting of the material intellect (*'aql-i hayūlā*), the angelic intellect (*'aql-i malaka*) the active intellect (*'aql-i bi'l-fi'l*) and the acquired intellect (*'aql-i mustafād*). In the opinion of Ibn Sina the acquired intellect is the extreme limit of the perfection of man. This is the limit at which the human being reaches the level of the angels. This limit can be reached during the lifetime of a human being and in fact the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* is a description of this crystallization and genesis of the soul.[47]

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[45] Arberry, *Avicenna*, p. 78.

[46] Cf. Ms. Ahmet III 3268(3), f. 29b; cf. Spies and Khatak, *ibid.*, p. 67.

[47] Ibn Sina, *Risāla-yi nafs*, ed. 'Amīd, p. 24 f.

E. Concealment and flight from the hunter

It is stated in the section of the story: "There are regions ahead of us which you must cross before you will be safe. Follow our tracks so that we may save you and guide you on the right way!"

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* it is also mentioned that to be saved from the hunter who represents natural law with its plan for the gradual death of every creature, it is necessary to become concealed from his sight or not to come within his range of vision. 'Not coming within his range of vision' is an image for engaging in intellectual, spiritual and divine matters and travelling the way leading to higher levels of the spirit. The secret (*sirr*) is a synonym with the soul in Ṣūfī terminology. Then concealment and staying out of reach means union with the world of spirits.

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* there is a discussion of the stations (*maqāmāt)* which the individual must attain, and they are the same as the nine mountains. The bird in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* is told not to build a nest, because it can become a trap where he can be easily caught, and he should not reside in any one place, especially at the higher levels and stations. This means that he should not form attachments to any of the stages he passes, though some of them can be accompanied by miracles and signs of wonder, but should continue steadily to increase his knowledge and piety. He should never believe that he has reached a safe place, because as long as the bonds of life are tied to his feet, he is within reach of the hunter of nature, and it is possible for him to fall into the snare a second time.

An interesting point here is the description of how the birds act when they are with dangers and hinders. Before the fall the birds were in the stage of the material intellect (*'aql-i hayūlā*), and they had not experienced life and the hunter in material form. Naturally they were deceived by the grain and the snare, but when the freed birds then set out on the way of perfection, they act in a very aware manner and confront difficulties with bravery and fearlessness in the face of difficulties. They never underestimate the ability and cleverness of the hunter. They know very well that pride can lead an individual to think that he has surmounted all the laws of nature, and the moment he does so, he falls head first into the snare of the hunter. Here they take the example of the lowly worm, pale and without pride as a model of behavior. In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* the birds travelling on the way remind themselves continually that they cannot assume that any dwelling place is safe and they are constantly on the move. When these birds have just set out on the way and first catch sight of the bird which is representing the soul of Ibn Sina, they only believe him after having tried him and even then they are still very cautious. When they set out they say to one another, "Let us hasten

and not rest until we have passed these regions! As long as we have not passed them we will not be safe."

F. The eighth station and paradise

In the section of the story the eighth level of the journey is described as follows:

> "We alighted on top of the mountain. The green gardens which had within their interior walls meadows, fruit-bearing trees and streams of living water captured one's sight with forms whose gracefulness puzzled the intellect and amazed the minds by their splendor. One heard songs of grief and delightful melodies and inhaled fragrances which surpassed the perfume of musk and fresh ambergris"

In the course of their travels the mystics reach a stage where they cannot continue, because they are exhausted by the excess of difficulties and mortification which they have experienced. If they continue with their mortification they will be reduced to non-being. As this is the way of life and not death, Ibn Sina believes that the training of the intellectual faculties should be undertaken in such a way that the individual does not fall into the snare of the hunter out of exhaustion but should have an opportunity to rest. This is the eighth station (the seventh mountain in systems with eight mountains or the eighth mountain if there are nine) or the place where the individual experiences paradise. This is the reward which he obtains for his way of living but, in the interpretation of Ibn Sina, the mystic sage must press on beyond it. At this level Abraham entered into the fire and the fire did not burn him and in the explanation of the *Qur'ān* the fire was transformed into paradise for him (*Qur.* 21: 68, 69).

In the testament (*waṣīyya*) Ibn Sina evokes the salamander as a symbol of the eighth station, the station where the fire does not burn the mystic. This is also the stage at which the birds find beauty and magnificence on the eighth mountain. But, according to Ibn Sina, one should not become overly attached to this paradise but, like the birds, rest at that level for an hour and then remember that even in paradise the enemy can be lying in wait to ambush them, because the journey has still not been completed.

In the *Dāniš-nāma* Ibn Sina stresses that when the soul of man is separated from animal soul and reaches this level (the Active Intellect) it experiences pleasure and happiness without limit or restriction. However, this stage is still not the most perfect degree, because it must be

transformed into the acquired or inferred intellect *('aql-i muktasab* or *mustafād).* At this level the individual studies the rational ideas.[48]

G. The ninth station and the angels

In the section of the story Ibn Sina, states: "We agreed upon departure and left the place. We landed on the eighth mountain whose summit was so high that it reached the highest heaven. On its slopes lived birds with sweeter melodies, more splendid colors, more graceful figures or more delightful companionship than theirs."

On the ninth mountain[49] the birds of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* reach the level of the angels. In the testament *(waṣīyya)* Ibn Sina evokes the bat as a symbol of the ninth station which indicates the station of the angels. It is secret, nocturnal, invisible and beyond the reach of Satan. There the angels guide the birds to the eternal source of knowledge and holy wisdom. In fact by means of the guidance of the angels they are brought to the city of the Great King and there, just as will be shown in the comparison between the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and the *Maqāmāt al-'ārifīn* in *al-Išārāt wa't-tanbīhāt,* the mystic reaches a level where he can see the light of the beauty of the Truth in the mirror of his heart and without intermediary establishes contact with the source of light. This is the level at which the individual reaches the Holy Intellect (*'Aql-i Qudsī*). Ibn Sina considers this level to be the level of prophethood and says that the soul is united with the Intellect by the Holy Spirit, which is the most noble of spirits followed by all the other spirits. He considers the Holy Spirit to be the divine will *(irāda),* which is neither body nor essences nor attributes but the Pure Divine Command (*Amr-i Pak-i Qudsī*).[50] Ibn Sina says that the level of the acquired intellect is the level at which the individual testifies about the rational ideas and that when the soul of man reaches this level it reaches ultimate perfection and is at the level of an angel.[51]

Ibn Sina says that the holy soul is the rational soul of the prophets which has become united with the world of the angels by means of

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[48] Ibn Sina, *ibid.,* ed. 'Amīd, p. 25.

[49] The ninth mountain is the same as the eighth. Because when the birds are on top of the first mountain, they see eight more mountains in front of themselves. It is stated in the section of the story as follows: "The flight took us between two flanks of the mountain of God, through a green and fertile, no a rather barren and devastated valley. We flew until we put its borders behind us. We crossed that region and reached the summit of the mountain. There in front of us were eight mountain-tops that eyes could not reach."

[50] Ibn Sina, *Mi'rāj-nāma,* ed. Māyil-Heravī, 2nd ed., p. 90.

[51] Ibn Sina, *Risāla-yi nafs,* ed. 'Amīd, p. 25 f.

intuition, and there he has come to understand the Truth without teacher or book or rational ideas.[52]

'Ibādī considers hearing the songs and melodies of the angels to be a metaphor for the union of the soul with the world of the spirits and that an individual who hears the truths in this world has understood the essential world.[53]

Sahlān Sāwī says about the ninth station, "The eighth mountain of which they say when they ascribe to the ninth. They relate it to the signs of the zodiac and fixed stars." [54] He says that the birds of the ninth heaven are the rational souls of the heavens, who console us when we arrive at that level.[55] In regard to the ninth mountain, Corbin states: Which makes nine summits in all (corresponding to the nine spheres), together constituting Mount *Qāf* as a cosmic mountain.[56]

H. The city of the King and the world of prophethood

With the guidance of the inhabitants of the ninth mountain the birds of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* come to the city of the King situated on the peak of, or behind, the mountain in order to ask him to remove the bonds from their feet, so they can remain eternally in his presence. Before meeting the King the birds pass through two courtyards and then reach the King's chamber, the breadth of which has neither limits nor bounds. There the second veil is removed from the eyes of the birds. The birds become so dazzled by the divine beauty that they forget what they wished to say (just as was described in the comparison between the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and the *Maqāmāt al-'ārifīn* in the book of *al-Išārāt*, "He understood what had overcome us, then He restored our strength by His kindness, so that we were encouraged to speak to Him and narrate our story before him." At this stage the birds have reached a point at which they must transform their wisdom because they acquire a new faculty of insight and instinct, which enables them to observe the Realities through the divine will. Then the King tells them, "None is able to unbind the snares from your legs except those who tied them. I will send them a messenger so as to oblige them to satisfy you and remove the snares from your legs."

At this level the mystic accedes to the level of inspiration which Ibn Sina comments as follows in the *Dāniš-nāma*:

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[52] Ibn Sina, *Dāniš-nāma (ṭabī'īyāt)*, ed. Miškāt, p. 145.

[53] Cf. 'Ibādī, *Ṣūfī-nāma*, p. 152.

[54] Cf. Spies and Khatak, *Three Treatises*, p. 87.

[55] Cf. Spies and Khatak, *ibid.*, p. 88.

[56] Corbin, Avicenna, p. 189.

"Inspiration is a connection between the angels and the soul of man. In this state information about other states is given, and in the material world it exercises an influence and miracles appear, that is, it receives a material form and takes on another form. This is the final human level which is connected to the level of angelhood."[57]

In the section of the mission (*risāla)* it is stated: "Now we are on the path accompanied by the Messenger."

The question can be asked why the King does not remove the bonds from the feet of the birds but in the end entrusts them to the Messenger, who will give the hunter a command. Ibn Sina believes that the Universal Intellect governs the world in a general way and that it does not intervene in individual or particular circumstances. In other words the law which rules the natural world will remain in force until the end, but the mystic, prophet or sage who has reached the highest levels and achieved union with the Holy Spirit is able to cause a fissure in matter and nature and change it. It is by virtue of this that prophets are able to perform signs of wonder and miracles.[58]

[57] Ibn Sina, *Dāniš-nāma (ṭabī'īyāt),* ed. Miškāt, p. 146.

[58] Ibn Sina, *ibid.,* ed. Miškāt, p. 141.

CHAPTER VI

The Literary background of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*

Although Ibn-Sina (370/980-428/1037) was the first to write a treatise with the title *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* in Arabic, he is not the inventor of the form. The *Risāla* already had a long history and had gone through several phases, both as an oral form, *xiṭāb,* and a written form, *kitāb*. The oral *risāla* was developed within pre-Islamic Arab culture. In early Arabia the spoken words was of extreme importance. For the Arabs the power of the word lay in the way they presented a speech. A man of power was distinguished by his excellence in speaking. A leading person like a preacher, a governor, a chief of a clan or even a prophet was most accepted, followed and admired when he manifested the power of the word in oral form.

This tradition of *xiṭāb* retained its importance even after the time of Muḥammad. Arab leaders of the early Islamic period, especially the Umayyads Caliphs, addressed people in the same manner, while at the same time they made the first attempts to give their past history a written form.[1]

On the other hand the epistolary genre had received various written forms among the peoples who came to be part of the Islamic empire. In this regard the Greek and Iranian legacies played a crucial role. This was accomplished by means of translations of models from Greek and Middle Persian made by the secretaries in the chanceries of the Caliphs. I shall now describe the historical development of the *risāla*.

A. *Risāla*

Risāla is an Arabic word which now has many different connotations such as 'message', 'to deliver a message', 'missive', 'letter', 'epistle', 'discourse' or 'book'. It can also mean 'writing related to science' and it is often limited to the treatment of only one subject. It can comprise a few questions, inquiries or problems which center on one issue. It can be a monograph. *Kitāb* and *xiṭāb* are two synonyms for *risāla*. *Xiṭāb,* which is supposed to be the spoken message, is found in both pre-Islamic times and the *Qur'ān*. In the *Qur'ān* the word *kitāb* signifies *risāla* or 'missive',

[1] Ṣafā, *Tārīx-i adabīyāt dar Irān*, vol. I, p. 122 f.

'letter', as when Solomon sends his messenger, the hoopoe to Šībā: "Take this letter of mine, and cast it unto them!" (*Qur.* 27: 29). *Risāla* is a substantive formed from *arsala.* It forms two plurals: *risālāt* and *rasā'il.*[2]

From the 5th/11th century on *risāla* is identical with *maqāma.* It is important to state a few points about *maqāma,* as it is a later development of a *risāla. Maqāma* designates a genre of rhymed and rhythmic prose composed of several episodes in which the hero is often a vagabond who has been driven away from his native town and has traveled to a remote country. The term *risāla* was used in Arabic long before the revelation of the *Qur'ān* and it has come down to us through the ancient inscriptions of Arabia. In ancient times *risāla* signified 'mission' or 'message' in general.

The term *risāla* in the *Qur'ān* retained its old connotation with close reference to God's message or mission. Specifically, it means to convey a message from God to His people by means of revelation, through the soul and language of an envoy who is a prophet *(nabī)* or a messenger *(rasūl).*

The term *risāla* appears 10 times in the *Qur'ān,* seven times as a plural form (*Qur.* 7: 62, 68, 93,144; 33: 39; 72: 23, 28) and three times in the singular (*Qur.* 7: 79; 5: 67; 6: 124). In eight verses *risāla,* either in the singular or in the plural, is accompanied by *iblāġ* which expresses that God's message is to be proclaimed in a clear and comprehensive language. Further, the *Qur'ān* itself is described as *balāġ* (*Qur.* 14: 52) and *bayān* (*Qur.* 3: 138), thus showing a close link with speech. Nūḥ, Hūd, Šu'aib, Ṣāliḥ and Mūsā are prophets whose names are all associated with the concept *iblāġ* and Muḥammad, the Prophet, is addressed by his title: "O Messenger, deliver that which has been sent down to thee from thy Lord" (*Qur.* 5: 67).

The term *risāla* retained its old Qur'ānic connotation, i.e. an oral mission or message (*xiṭāb*), throughout the Umayyad period. It was from about 78/ 697 onwards that the term *risāla* began to evolve and become associated with new significance such as 'written message', 'written correspondence' or 'letter' (*kiṭāb*).

Before moving to the epistolary genre in written form it is relevant to point out that originally *risāla* implied the oral transmission of a message. Further one can note that in the *Qur'ān risāla* expresses a nuance of 'election' and 'elevation' of a person by God, to proclaim His will to a designated people. Here another aspect of the term *risāla* comes into focus. It implies that two sides are involved, namely, the sender and the addressee who are linked together by means of an envoy.

However, as was mentioned in the beginning, *risāla* has many different connotations. How the other meanings emerged from the meaning

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[2] Cf. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon,* p. 1084; *al-Bustān,* Book I. part 3., p. 893.

'spoken letter' and how it came to be transferred to mean a written text will be explained in the following section.

The transfer of *xiṭāb* to *kitāb* was mainly the result of needs experienced by both the Arabs and the defeated peoples. Many factors contributed to making this process of transfer go quickly. The *Qur'ān,* which was proclaimed orally by Muḥammad had already been written down by the time of 'Uṭmān, the third Caliph. The armies of the new Islamic Empire conquered one country after the other. The spread of Islam in the time of the Umayyad and 'Abbasid Caliphates progressed steadily and many riches were brought to the Arabs, among which were the literary treasures of the other peoples. The substitution of Arabic for Persian and Greek was also an important factor in the creation of a written epistolary genre in Arabic. The process of Arabization of the chancery that began at the time of 'Abdu'l-Malik was completed in the time of his son Ḥišām (105-25/ 724-43). The tenth Caliph, who was interested in having access to the heritage of his conquered peoples, prompted a "translation program", through which many books from other languages, mainly Middle Persian, were translated into Arabic.[3]

Moreover, according to the belle-lettristic history books by Ibn an-Nadīm, al-Mas'ūdī and some others, three names are associated with the foundation of Arabic literature in its written form; Abu'l-'Alā ibn Sālim, the secretary of 'Abdu'l-Malik, is the first person to use the term *risāla* to designate a written letter. He does this in the title of the collection of letters purported to be from Aristotle to Alexander *Risālat Arisṭāṭālīs ilā'l-Iskandar fī sīyāsat al-mudun.* It has been suggested that some of these letters were translated from Greek, some have been reworked from Middle Persian and others are probably his own works.[4]

Sālim's translations played a crucial role in the history of the epistolary genre in Arabic literature. After him his disciple, 'Abdu'l-Ḥamīd, continued to translate Persian books in the footsteps of his master.

'Abdu'l-Ḥamīd al-Kātib, the secretary of Ḥišām, followed by Ḥasan ibn Sahl Saraxsī, the minister of al-Ma'mūn (the Abbasid Caliph) established certain rules for secretaries, which included learning the history of the Iranians, the poetry of the Arabs and the science of the Greeks and to be able to express ideas in good Arabic.[5]

Ibn al-Muqaffa' is the third secretary who translated many books, such as *Kalīla wa Dimna* from Middle Persian into Arabic. These three men of great scholarship and literary knowledge were all *mawālī* or non-

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[3] Cf. al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj aḏ-ḏahab*, vol. I, pp. 221, 190, 73.

[4] Latham, *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature*, vol. II, pp. 156 ff; Arazi and Ben-Shammay, "*Risāla*", *E I2* , vol. VIII, p. 532.

[5] Ṣafā, *Tārīx*, p. 48 ff.

Arabs who converted to Islam. Moreover, each of these three men contributed to giving the epistolary genre a new form. They changed the secretarial style from short, concise messages to a more elaborate form. They laid the foundation of a form that developed into an instrument with which one could express socio-political, scientific, religious or philosophical questions. Afnan shows in a very explicit way that this secular literature, which was introduced by the non-Arab scholars, played a crucial role in preparing the Arabic language to express philosophy and was the chief source of its technical terms.[6]

At the end of this section it should be noted that the era of al-Ma'mūn (d. 833 A. D.) is of extreme importance regarding the development of the epistolary genre. Inspired by the story of Anūšīrwān who sent his physician to India to bring him a copy of *Kalīla wa Dimna*, he sent groups of scholars to Asia Minor and Cyprus to bring back Greek books. He rewarded poets, scholars and translators and supported the old medical and philosophical school of Gundīšāpūr. It is also about this time that great scholars began to set off on journeys in search of knowledge; linguists went to Arabia to learn the pure tongue of Bedouins. Geographers traveled in the world of the new Islamic Empire and wrote scholarly accounts. It was in this milieu that the epistolary genre approached its zenith and Islamic philosophy began to flourish. It was a brilliant era which had emerged from the writings of Ibn al-Muqaffa', 'Abdu'l-Ḥamīd al-Kātib and the literary, philosophical attempts of Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq (d. 873 A. D.) and al-Kindī. It was also this age which gradually gave birth to the authors of the *Rasāil ixwān aṣ-ṣafā*, Fārābī (d. 399/950-951), called "the second teacher" after Aristotle, and finally Ibn Sina, who surpassed all his predecessors in science and philosophy.

B. *Ṭair*

The second member of the noun phrase *risālat uṭ-ṭair* is an Arabic term which stands for 'birds' or 'bird' in general. It denotes whatever flies in the air with two wings.[7] *Ṭair* is a generic word which does not indicate any specific kind of bird. It is collective or plural as to meaning and is more frequently construed as a feminine noun than as masculine.[8]

The bird, by virtue of its flight and song, has symbolized the soul in universal mythic imagery since the dawn of the history of mankind. Birds have been the symbols of the links between Heaven and Earth. Angels, higher forms of being and spiritual states, are symbolized by birds. As

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[6] Afnan, *Avicenna, His Life and Works*, p. 10.

[7] Cf. *al-Bustān*, vol. II, p. 1485.

[8] Cf. Lane, *Arabic* , Book I.- part 6, p. 1904.

birds are messengers of God, they are associated with wisdom and freedom. Such birds have no settled nests and travel from one state to another. Their song is said to represent songs of praise of God. These two traits together have made them a perfect symbol by which the human being illustrates his ultimate desire for perfection and unity with God. They express a universal yearning for the return to the origin.

This theme has been important in all the cultures of the ancient Near East from Egypt to India including Mesopotamia, Iran and Palestine. In the ancient religion of Egypt the bird as a symbol for the soul can be seen in the hieroglyphic script in which a bird with human head indicates 'soul'. Further in *the Book of the Dead* the dead body is depicted as a falcon with open wings.[9] In Mesopotamian sources from the Akkadian period the bird is a symbol of heaven and the serpent stands for earth. Fables deal with battles between the serpent and the eagle. The war of birds and snakes is a constant motif of Asian iconography and is sometimes seen as the battle of life and death.

In Greek the term 'bird' is synonym for heavenly message. In the *Old Testament* God is portrayed as a winged being in the description of creation: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters." (Gen. 1: 1-2).

Farther east, in India, birds symbolize friendship between gods and man. In the ancient Vedic texts the bird Syena flies to the inaccessible tops of the mountains to fetch *Soma* (ambrosia) to feed mankind. In the *Upanishads* the soul is sometimes defined as a migrating bird (Sanskrit *hamsa*) that migrates from body to body until it flies to the nest where it is safe from the perils of transmigration. Furthermore, in Vedānta there are two birds which symbolize the active individual soul (*jīvātmā*), and the Universal spirit (*ātman*) which is pure knowledge: "In reality they are not separated and for this reason they are sometimes depicted as a single bird with two heads."[10]

In Iran, the heavenly *farrah* or *xwarrah* (an equivalent of *šaxīna* in Heb. and *sakīna* in Arab.) is likened to a bird. In Yašt 19: 34 it is told how Jamšīd told a lie and how as a result his *farrah,* which made him immortal, flew from him in the body of *Verethraghna,* a falcon. Further they speak of the *karšift* 'raven' as the first bird to be created and who carried the religion of Zoroaster to the unseen fortress of Jamšīd (*var-i Jamkard*).[11] *Karšift* means 'swift flight' and refers to a bird who is the

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[9] Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, p. 3.

[10] Cf. Chevalier and Gheerbrant, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, p. 87.

[11] Cf. West, *Middle Persian Texts*, vol. I, p. 70.; Westergaard, *Bundahišn*, p. 56.

leader of other birds and can also speak in human language.[12] As attested by the following extract from the Iranian *Bundahišn,* this bird is above all the other birds including Sīmurġ. "First among the birds the three-fingered Sēn came into being; he is not chief, because the *karšift* is the chief, the bird who brought the religion to the enclosure made by Jam".[13]

There are many specific kinds of birds which serve as symbols in different contexts such as the nightingale, parrot, duck, peacock or falcon and eagle, as can be found in the earliest religious literature. Another bird mentioned in the present study is the hoopoe, famous as the messenger who delivered letters from Solomon. Since the dove is of greater importance for the continuation of the present study it will be introduced here.

Among birds it is said that the dove is loyal to its mate and that it mourns and grieves at its loss. It is probably this quality which has made the dove a symbol of pure love, both sacred and profane. The dove always returns to its home from the most remote of places and therefore is always associated with the sending of messages. The dove (Heb. *yonah*) was first mentioned in the Bible in association with Noah. "When the dove returned to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf." (Gen. 8:8-11). In addition to the above traits, the grace and beauty of the dove with its spotless white feathers make it a perfect symbol for the embodiment of the soul.

In the *New Testament* the dove symbolizes the Holy Spirit: "When all people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove." (Luke 3: 21-22). Further in the *New Testament* the dove is mentioned and admired because of its purity and innocence: "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves." (Matthew 10: 16).

In the Islamic tradition the dove appears in many treatises including Ibn Sina's treatise of the birds, and his poem on the descent of the soul into the world, *Qaṣīdat al-'aynīyā* in which the soul is presented as a dove which descends from heaven:

"It descended upon thee from out of the regions above,
That exalted, ineffable, glorious, heavenly Dove"[14]

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[12] Cf. Bahār, *Pažūhišī dar asāṭīr-i Irān*, vol. I, p. 180.

[13] Westergaard, *Bundahišn*, p. 57; West, *Middle Persian Texts,* vol. I, p. 89; cf. Christiensen, *Du premier homme et du Premier roi*, trans. Tafażżulī and Āmūzgār, vol. II, p. 312.

[14] Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, vol. II, p. 110.

The dove of Ibn Sina's poem stands for the human soul rather than the soul of the universe or the Active Intellect.

In Christianity the dove represents the Holy Spirit which is identical with the archangel Gabriel in Islam and *Spenta Mainyu* in Avestan texts.

In this context it is relevant to mention that the symbolism of Sīmurġ in the Islamic Iranian tradition is identical with that of the dove in Christianity. This is explained more fully in the discussion about Sīmurġ in the next section.

Several birds feature prominently in the religious lore of the region. These birds are mythical and have no model in nature. Sometimes they have a composite form and sometimes a non-composite. Some of them are of importance in the present study because they interact with *ṭair* 'bird' which symbolizes the soul. They do this in virtue of the fact that they have been made to correspond to the Active Intellect or first theophany of God. Of these the most important are Garuda, Burāq, 'Anqā and Sīmurġ. The first two will be described together as they have much in common.

Garuda is a sacred and mythical bird which serves as a mount for the Indian god, Vishnu. It has a human head, three eyes, the beak of an eagle and two wings. Together with Naga, a serpent upon which Vishnu rests, it symbolizes the two images of Vishnu as one who destroys and rebuilds, who kills and restores to life. According to a quotation, cited by Daniélou the name Garuda is derived from the root *gr*, "to speak". He concludes that: "When Visu is awake he rides upon a bird, half vulture, half man, named "Wings of Speech (Garuda)."[15]

Burāq, like Garuda, is a composite bird with a human face upon whom the Prophet Muḥammad rides on his night journey from Makka (the Sacred Mosque) to Jerusalem (the Farthest Mosque) (*Qur.* 17: 1). From there he was taken to different levels of heaven. There he beholds the light of God in which the Lote-Tree (*Sidrat al-Muntahā*) was bathed (*Qur.* 53: 9-17). Burāq is also described as the horse that the archangel Michael leads to the Prophet and that has a human head, the body of a horse and wings like a vulture.[16]

'Anqā, 'long neck' in Arabic, is a fabulous composite bird whose abode is in the Arabian peninsula. This bird, which is probably of Arab origin, shares some of the characteristics of the phoenix. This bird was well-known among the ancient Greeks and is mentioned by Herodotes as living in the desert of Arabia. In *Nuzhat al-Qulūb* Ḥamd'ullāh Mustaufī describes the 'Anqā as:

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15 Daniélou, *The Gods of India (Hindu Polytheism)*, p. 160.

16 Rāzī, *Tafsīr rūḥ al-janān,* vol. 7-8, p. 168 ; Maibudī, *Kašf ul-asrār*, vol. V, p. 484 f.

"A bird of powerful build, such that it can easily carry off an elephant. It is called the king of birds, because when it kills its prey it eats what suffices it, and the rest it abandons to (other) animals, and does not come back to its own leaving and this is a characteristic of kings. It lives 1,700 years, and lays eggs when 300 years old and they hatch after 25 years"[17]

Mustaufī quotes from various sources, among which one identifies the bird 'Anqā as a winged creature born near Jerusalem with a face like that of a man. Mustaufī believes that the reason 'Anqā disappeared was that he challenged Solomon.[18] In Arabic tradition, however, 'Anqā symbolizes the farthest point of spiritual development which is beyond the reach of ordinary human beings and that is why he is called *'Anqā 'l-muġrib* which denotes that it dwells in solitude.

Already in early Islamic texts 'Anqā is an Arabic synonym for Sīmurġ as we can read in the Arabic translation of Ibn al-Muqaffa's *Kalīla wa Dimna*. Also in the *'Ajāyib al-maxlūqāt* 'Anqā and Sīmurġ are identical: "But among big birds 'Anqā is the king of birds, which is also called Sīmurġ and is on the top of Qāf."[19]

Sīmurġ is a Persian word adopted from the Middle Iranian north-western dialect and alternates occasionally with the south western form *sēnmurw*. The first element of this compound word goes back to the Old Iranian word for a large bird, sometimes 'falcon' and sometimes 'eagle' attested in Avestan *saēna,* and the second element denotes 'bird'.[20]

In Avestan this bird is a non-composite mythical bird which shares the same characteristics as the eagle. In the Sasanian period it had developed composite features and received various attributes from different beasts. Sasanian art of the period provides some good examples of this. After the spread of Islam this most sacred Iranian bird reappeared in a non-composite form and was to play the role of a totem of Iranian culture. Its importance as a symbol can be seen in two contexts.

1)The bird is seen as the savior and guardian of Iran. This is exemplified in the Middle Persian texts (*Xudāy-nāma*) reflected in the *Šāh-nāma* by Firdausī, in which Sīmurġ intervenes in the life of Sām and his son, Zāl, to ensure that Irānšahr would always have a hero to defend it.

2) As a theophany of God in Ṣūfī literature. Aḥmad Ġazzālī in his *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* was the first Ṣūfī master to employ the Persian name Sīmurġ for God. Aḥmad Ġazzālī in *Sawāniḥ* likened the ultimate love to

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[17] Mustaufī, *Nuzhat al-Qulūb* , p. 79 f.

[18] Mustaufī, *ibid.*, p. 80.

[19] Qazwīnī, *'Ajāyib al-maxlūqāt*, p. 253 f.

[20] Cf. Schmidt, "The Senmurw," *Persica*, no. IX, 1980, p. 2.

the eternal *murġ*,[21] and Suhrawardī in *Safīr-i sīmurġ*, inspired by Ġazzālī and the book of the *Bundahišn*, describes Sīmurġ as the theophany of God in a similar way.[22] 'Aṭṭār, the Ṣūfī poet, inspired by his antecedent Ṣūfīs, Ġazzālī and Suhrawardī, created in the *Manṭiq uṭ-ṭair* a new Ṣūfī image of Sīmurġ which surpassed all its preceding images. His book was entitled the *Manṭiq uṭ-ṭair* (the Language of the bird) instead of being called the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* (the Epistle of the bird).

In the *Qur'ān ṭair* is mentioned 19 times, occurring in 14 sūras and 17 verses. In the story of Abraham *ṭair* is the symbol used to depict resurrection and immortality (*Qur.* 2: 260). In the story of Joseph the birds represent the immortal part of life that feed on the mortal aspect. In the story of Joseph it is mentioned that when Joseph was in prison two young men were put in prison at the same time. "Said one of them, I dreamed that I was pressing grapes. Said the other, I dreamed that I was carrying on my head bread, that birds were eating of" (*Qur.* 12: 36).

Joseph interpreted their dreams as follows: "Fellow-prisoner, as for one of you, he shall pour wine for his lord; as for the other, he shall be crucified, and birds will eat of his head" (*Qur.* 12: 39). As the contents of the verses suggest, bread symbolizes the body or physical part of the human being and the bird stands for soul and immortality. In the same manner wine also represents immortality, and soul. The one who dreamt of wine was set free and served the king. Regarding birds and immortality it is said in the *Qur'ān* that in eternal life in Paradise the immortal will receive as food the delicious meat of birds (*Qur.* 56: 21). In the story of David birds sing and praise God together with David (*Qur.* 21:79; 34:10; 38:19).

Birds acting in praise of God are mentioned again in the *Qur'ān,* as can be seen in the following context: "Seest thou not that it is Allah Whose praises all beings in the heavens and on earth do celebrate, and the birds (of the air) with wings outspread? Each one knows its own (mode of) prayer and praise. And Allah knows well all that they do" (*Qur.* 24: 41; 67: 19; 16: 79).

In the *Qur'ān* the language of the birds is the most important language by which wisdom and knowledge are transmitted to mankind. Solomon proudly mentions that he and his father were taught the language of the birds (*Qur.* 27: 16). Solomon is the prophet who enjoys the company of the birds in his service both on his flying carpet and when he sends letters. The hoopoe is his messenger to the land of Šībā where he carries out the orders of Solomon expressed as follows: "Go thou, with this letter of mine, and deliver it to them: then draw back from them, and (wait to) see what answer they return." (*Qur.* 27: 17, 28).

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[21] Cf. Ġazzālī, *Sawāniḥ*, ed. Retter, p. 13.

[22] Cf. Spies and Khatak, *Three Treatises on Mysticism,* (the Persian Part), p. 13 f.

Birds seem to introduce the messenger of God in the case of *Abābīl*. "Did He not make their guile to go astray? And He loosed upon them birds in flights, hurling against them stones of baked clay" (*Qur.* 105: 3-4). Finally, in the story of Jesus *ṭair* stands for the Holy Spirit; "I will create for you out of clay as the likeness of a bird; then I will breathe into it, and it will be a bird, by the leave of God" (*Qur.* 3: 49; 5: 110).

Thus in the *Qur'ān ṭair* 'birds' stands for soul, angel, immortality and praise and the language of the bird is wisdom, which is revealed to human being by the leave of God.

C. The influence of the *Qur'ān* on the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*

The style which Ibn Sina uses in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* to explain the way of the mission (*risāla*) is new and it is interesting to see what his source of inspiration was. It has been suggested that Ibn Sina used as a model the style of composition of some of the sūras of the *Qur'ān* like The Ants (*an-Naml*) and The Poets (*aš-Šu'arā*). It is significant that he concludes this particular treatise with a verse from the *Qur'ān,* especially as there is no other work in which he does this (with the exception of the expression *al-ḥamd u lil-Allāh ar-rab al--'Ālamīn* which is sometimes quoted). Ordinarily he does not directly borrow verses from the *Qur'ān* in developing his thought but usually prefers to integrate the meaning of them in his own words, sometimes in allegorical language. At this final point however he quotes the verse directly, because by this means he relates his treatise to the Sūra of the Poets and in an indirect way puts to shame those who accuse him of insanity whether in his own time or after him.

Regarding the question of why he has omitted the exordium, it can be observed that he begins his treatise in the style of the Sūra of Acquittance (*barā'a*). This is the one sūra of the *Qur'ān* which begins directly without the usual preliminary formulaic remarks. And this maintenance of innocence or acquittance in the face of false friends and disapproving companions and those who brought accusations against him permeates the spirit of his treatise. At the end he speaks openly of the topic which he has been explaining all through the treatise and acquits himself of their accusations. This becomes clear by comparing the following verse of the *Qur'ān* which occurs at the beginning of the Sūra of Acquittal or Repentance, "An acquittal (*barā'a*), from God and His messenger, unto the idolaters with whom you made covenant" (*Qur.* 9: 1). At the end of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair,* in the section of *barā'a* Ibn Sina writes:"The more they say the less I would accept and the worst of discourse is that which is

wasted. Seeking help from God and acquittal (*barā'a*) (from me) unto people. Whoever professes otherwise would suffer loss."

On the question of the influence of the *Qur'ān* on Ibn Sina in his style of writing in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* it can be suggested that Ibn Sina also uses the Sūra of Praise (*al-Ḥamd*) as a model. In the Sūra of Ḥamd or Opening, the first sūra of the *Qur'ān*, God is described in the four first verses and in the fifth verse the tone of the sūra changes and there is a change from third person to second person, "Thee only we serve; to Thee alone we pray for succor" (*Qur.* 1: 1-4).

Likewise, in the introduction to the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* Ibn Sina delineates the difference between the true brothers and the false friends. Up to this point Ibn Sina is either addressing himself or an unknown person in describing the brothers of truth. Then he recollects that the brothers have been assembled by means of the herald of God and then all at once addresses the brothers of truth in such a way that one would believe that they were present before his eyes. From "Spread in the world and join together" until the end of the testament Ibn Sina addresses himself directly to the brothers of truth, directly just as in the *Qur'ān* the speech is directed towards God.

D. The influence of the style of composition of the *Rasā'il ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* on the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*

After the *Qur'ān* one of the basic sources of inspiration of Ibn Sina as to the style of composition is the *Rasā'il of the Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā*. Before the time of Ibn Sina the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* did much to develop the method of question and answer in a logical and reasoning form. At the same time they also developed the use of allegory and tales to clarify topics which were more difficult to comprehend because this gave them the opportunity to describe and repeat complicated points in other words. An example is provided by the sixth treatises of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* which discusses corporeality and natures in natural substances.

Ibn Sina's prose in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* is firm, beautiful and strong in a manner which cannot be observed in most of his other treatises, and his language is full of original images without any of the exaggerations of the *badī'* style. In fact, from the standpoint of esthetics, the language of this treatise is one of the most beautiful literary works of Ibn Sina. A finer point of the treatise is that Ibn Sina uses a language mixed with allegory which can be interpreted as the language of the bird (*manṭiq uṭ-ṭair*), expressing secret contents which are inserted into the structure of the treatise in such a way that the trusted friend will understand the inner meaning, while the stranger will remain unknowing.

In conclusion each section of the treatise explains and perfects another section and step by step it leads the hearer of the truth to the final level. The tone of the text is established in the opening statement of a complaint. Then it takes on the form of an argument and proceeds with the expression of principle matters and in order to explain those topics makes use of logical language. Then the language becomes partly allegorical and partly logical. At the stage of the *hadīṭ* it becomes completely allegorical, in the third part it becomes descriptive and in the last part it gradually returns to logical exposition. This last section binds together the allegorical section and the other two sections into a complete work characterized by accord and harmony.

E. A comparison of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*'s style of composition and Ibn Sina's other works

From the point of view of style the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* is one of the most exceptional writings of Ibn Sina. In contrast to his other writings and the style of the time as observed in treatises by his contemporaries there is no trace of the usual exordium and praise of God in the introduction. The treatise concludes by quoting a verse from the *Qur'ān,* which is also a deviation from the usual style of the treatises of Ibn Sina

At the time of Ibn Sina the typical way of organizing scientific, logical, philosophical, theological or mystical material was to follow the pattern of question and answer; a real or fictive inquirer asks a question and the writer formulates his answer as the body of the treatise. Therefore before entering into the subject matter of the treatise, it was usual for the writer to address by name the person who has asked him to deal with the subject at hand. For example, Ibn Sina begins his *Risāla fī maxārij al-ḥurūf* with praise and eulogy of God and prayers for the Prophet and his family and then goes on to point out that Šaix Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn 'Umar requested him to write a brief treatise on the subject of the causes of the formation of speech (*Asbāb ḥudūṭ al-ḥarf*). Then Ibn Sina explains that his treatise will consist of six sections which he names, and only then does he proceeds to develop his exposition of the subject.[23] In this treatise Ibn Sina uses clear and scientific language and his explanation is well-reasoned, exact and logical. He definitely does not use allegory or parables to illustrate the subject.

In *Rag-šināsī*, one of Ibn Sina's treatises in Persian, the ordering of the component parts as described above is fully observed. It begins with

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[23] Cf. Ibn Sina, *Asbāb ḥudūṭ al-ḥurūf,* ed. Xānlarī, p. 3 f.

praise and eulogy of God and the prophet and continues by giving the name of the person who has requested him to address the particular subject of the treatise which is now going to be presented. Only after these preliminaries does he answer the question by giving a scientific and logical explanation in which there is no trace of allegory.[24]

Risālat an-nafs, *Dāniš-nāma-yi A'lā'ī*, *Kitāb an-najāt*, *Risāla fi'l-'išq* and many of the other treatises of Ibn Sina follow the model of writing described above. In another group of his treatises, such as those which were written as commentaries (*tafsīr*) on the short sūras of the *Qur'ān* he begins by praising God and the prophet and then proceeds directly to the exegesis of the sūra. He does not set forth a question or name anyone as having inquired about a matter, but the language is characterized by the same demonstrative and reasoning style as can be seen in the other treatises. Esoteric expressions are not used, nor are parables and allegory to be found. His purpose is to try to render the Qur'ānic mysteries understandable by means of philosophical and logical explanations.

Another group of treatises by Ibn Sina were written in the form of letters to some of the great men of the time like Abū Sa'īd ibn Abi'l-Xair and Abū Raiḥān al-Birūnī or to some of his students like Ma'ṣūmī. In these treatises Ibn Sina opens his discourse with a short exordium on the greatness of God and then proceeds to set forth the question or problem which he has been requested to treat. Of course, the name of the inquirer is not in the treatise, but he makes it clear at the beginning of each section that he has written the letter in response to a question put forward by a particular person. The name of the inquirer occurs only in the title of the treatise as for example in *Risāla ajwabat aš-šaix ar-ra'īs 'an masā'il Abī Raiḥān al-Bīrūnī*.[25]

In another group of treatises by Ibn Sina such as *Bayān al-jawhar an-nafīs* he registers an objection to a statement by his predecessors in philosophy in a style which suggests that he is beginning a new work. He does not, however, open with a distinct exordium nor does he propose a subject but simply states his objection and then gives his own solution to the problem. Also in these treatises there is no use of metaphor, allegory or parable, and his language is clear, logical and reasoning.[26]

Another treatise is *Ḥayy ibn Yaqżān* which, from the point of view of organization of material, was written according to the rules of the treatise (*risāla*). Thus the author begins with a declaration of praise and trust in God and then speaks of how the brothers urged him to recount the story of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqżān*. He then proceeds to unfold the story in the manner that is most fitting for this kind of tale, i.e. it is told entirely in allegorical

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[24] Cf. Ibn Sina, *Rag-šināsī* or *Risāla dar nabż*, ed. Miškāt, p. 2 f.

[25] Cf. Aṣ-Ṣabrī al-Kurdī, *Jāmi' al-badāyi'*, p. 119.

[26] Cf. Aṣ-Ṣabrī al-Kurdī, *ibid.*, p. 256.

language. As each mystery (*ramz*) is explicated, the listeners, who are familiar with Ibn Sina's philosophy and logic, perceive the inner meaning of each point and how to apply it to reach their goal. It is important to note that in this *risāla* Ibn Sina tells a story in a style that is completely allegorical.

The *Mi'rāj-nāma*, a work attributed to Ibn Sina and which will be treated in detail in Chapter IX of the present study, can also be classified as a *risāla* insofar as it contains all the introductory parts of the classical *risāla* composition, even though it differs drastically in content from the other works by Ibn Sina. This *risāla*, which consists of an introduction and three parts, has a relatively long exordium at the beginning of the introduction in which the author praises the God of the body and soul and calls down blessings on the Prophet and wishes well to his descendants. At this point he recalls that he has been requested to set forth an exposition of the *mi'rāj* in a rational manner. He remarks that, because of the interest in the subject, the bonds of indolence at the elevated court of 'Alā ad-daula were loosened. After a warning about the harmful effects which follow upon disclosing secrets to strangers and unfamiliar persons, he relates in a concise manner some of the contents the three sections.[27] This is followed by a section on how the condition of prophethood is manifested in an exposition which is reasoning in tone and reminiscent of his writing in the *Dāniš-nāma*, the *Risāla-yi nafs* and the *Risāla fi'l-ma'ād*.[28]

The second part of this treatise introduces the subject of the *mi'rāj* in the same reasoning style as that of the first section with no hint of metaphor or allegory. In the third section the story of the *mi'rāj* of the prophet is recounted. Ibn Sina tells the story in the same style that he used in explicating the short sūras of the *Qur'ān*. Meanwhile he provides an interlinear commentary explicating the secret meaning of the *mi'rāj* from his own philosophical point of view. He provides a step by step description of how to reach the station of prophethood and gives logical and exact expression to each of the symbols expressed in coded terms (*ramz*). In the *Mi'rāj-nāma* he is still on the firm ground of explaining symbols in clear philosophical language and in this respect this treatise differs from the treatise of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqżān* which is an allegory.

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* Ibn Sina employs a style of composition which is completely different from all the rest of his works. He does not begin the work with an exordium nor is there any clear indication of the presence of an inquirer nor is any question propounded which the treatise would be expected to answer. But there is a question at the very beginning of the treatise which differs from all the scientific and philosophical

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[27] Cf. Ibn Sina, *Mi'rāj-nāma,* ed. Māyil-Heravī, p. 79 f.

[28] Cf. Ibn Sina, *ibid.*, pp. 81-95.

questions which occur in the beginning of the other treatises. The author of the treatise begins his treatise directly with a cry for help in the style of treatises of complaint and this cry at the beginning of the treatise is expressed in the form of a question, "Will anyone among my brothers lend me an ear that I may tell him some part of my burden? Perhaps he can lift from me some of my sorrow through sharing"

After this the tone of the treatise changes; instead of disclosing the cause of his complaint or explaining his pain, he proceeds to describe material friendships and firmly upholds the value of true friendship. He maintains that true friendship has spiritual roots and that the summons of the herald of God plays a fundamental role in gathering these friends, whom he calls the brothers of truth. He defines the friends or brothers of truth and specifies who the brother of truth is. The introduction is followed by the first chapter or section which has the character of a testament (*waṣiyya*), a designation which was used by Suhrawardī when he translated the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* into Persian.[29] In it Ibn Sina prepares the brother of truth to set out on the path of spirituality, but still he does not say anything more about the burden of pain which he will certainly experience together with Ibn Sina. In this part Ibn Sina mixes allegorical language with reasoning and in his new style addresses the listener with an image: "Conceal yourselves like hedgehogs when they retract their heads." For the hedgehog symbolizes the behavior which the brothers should adopt. In other words the author advises his listeners that they must assume the identity of the hedgehog. In this passage he speaks in a language which is completely allegorical, which the brother will decode in order to arrive at the intention hidden in the inner core. In this case he is referring to renunciation, the concealing of secrets and seclusion. The style of this chapter or section of the treatise is more like the works of counsel (*waṣīyya*) and advice of the theologians and has a tone which is seldom heard in the other works of Ibn Sina.

In the first section, which Suhrawardī designated as the testament (*waṣīyya*), Ibn Sina prepares his listeners, who have gathered together in response to the summons of the herald for the secret or pain, in words that are partly allegorical and partly logical in content. Thus in the same way that Ḥayy in the story of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqżān* awakens Ibn Sina and discusses with him the stages of the journey that they are about to set out on, Ibn Sina in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* also prepares the brothers who have been awakened for each stage of the journey. In the testament (*waṣīyya*) he assumes the same responsibility towards the brothers as Ḥayy does in relation to him (Ibn Sina) in the treatise of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqżān*. At the end of the testament he explains for them in clear language that the goal of

[29] Cf. Spies and Khatak, eds. *Three Treatises,* p. 39.

the journey is to reach the station of the angels. But still the author hasn't spoken of the pain which he set forth at the beginning of the treatise.

In the second section of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair,* Ibn Sina tells a story (ḥadīṯ). This *ḥadīṯ* is completely allegorical and in this aspect it is more like the tale of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqżān* than any of his other works. There are even expressions used in the *hadīṯ* which are identical with those of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqżān*. An example of this can be noted in the description of the king whom Ḥayy ibn Yaqżān meets in the farthest part of the kingdom of heaven about whom the following is reported, "for his beauty is a face and his generosity a hand", and in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* we find, "And every defect even in the sense of a metaphor is completely banished from him. For his beauty is a face and for his generosity a hand." Further, just as in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqżān* the reader of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* is able to replace each symbol by the concept behind it or a sentence containing a logical or philosophical explanation. However, the difference between the style of composition of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and *Ḥayy ibn Yaqżān* consists of this that, in the latter treatise, the subject is treated entirely by means of allegory, metaphor and symbol while, in the first treatise, it is only in the second chapter in which the *ḥadīṯ* is developed that the contents are expressed by means of allegory. The language of the introduction and the other three parts is full of images but the contents are not presented as an allegory. In comparing for example 'the light of reason' with the 'light of the beauty of the king' which is described in the *ḥadīṯ* one can see the difference between allegorical language and allegory. These two treatises differ also in the manner in which they convey their message. In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* the writer places the allegory at the heart of the treatise and uses the other four parts like an outer explanatory skin around the heart, without openly stating that they illustrate each other. In *Ḥayy ibn Yaqżān*, on the other hand, the author depends entirely on allegory to convey his message.

In the second chapter Ibn Sina at last lifts the veil concealing his pain. At this point the reader understands that union with the true friends can provide alleviation from the pain of separation and that the only solution for the birds who share the same pain is to fly together. In this section he proceeds to treat the same topics which were discussed in the introduction and in the testament but this time in symbolic language. Thus for example in the introduction he is seeking for a brother who will share his pain and thereby make it easier to bear; in the testament he stresses that the true brothers must live in solidarity so they can lift their veil of secrecy for each other in safety and security together. In the *ḥadīṯ* he shows how the true brothers can lift the veil from their secrets in the example of the imprisoned bird which teaches them how to leave the

prison. Here at last he explains that the pain already mentioned in the first line of the treatise stems from being a prisoner.

In the third section, designated as mission (*risāḷa*), he speaks of the meeting with an angel whose brilliance he describes. The inner meaning is full of imagery without being allegorical and is very different from the language with which Ibn Sina describes God in his philosophical treatises. The language of Ibn Sina in this section can only be compared with that used by Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān in describing God.

In the fourth section, which can be called 'acquittance' (*barā'a*), he addresses the stories in circulation about him and acquits himself of the judgment of insanity of which he has been accused by a number of people. The language of this section of the treatise is direct in most places, however with some examples of imagery. It resembles the style which he uses in the *Qānūn fi'ṭ-ṭibb*, the neutral language used by a physician in prescribing medicine.

At this point it is important to observe that, while there are differences in style between the different sections of the *Risāḷa,* there exists in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* a perfectly logical relation between the five sections, i. e. the introduction and the four sections. For example, in the last section Ibn Sina acquits himself of the judgment of insanity which some people acquainted with medicine have expressed. If one were to read and judge the last section separately one would grasp very little of the subject, but when it is read in connection with the preceding chapter (*hadīṯ*) its relation becomes perfectly clear. In fact this last section provides the completing link which joins the chain of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* together and completes its meaning.

It should be observed that in this last section Ibn Sina quotes the concluding verse of the Sūra of the Poets (*Qur.* 26: 227): "And those who do wrong shall surely know by what overturning they will be overturned." The general theme of the Sūra of the Poets is guidance on the question of the prophethood of Muḥammad. It treats of a number of persons, especially some of the poets who claim to be eloquent and cultured, who have denied his prophethood and accused him of lying, sorcery and insanity, just as prophets before him like Moses had been charged with the same evil-doing. At the end of the sūra the Prophet receives the glad tidings that he need not worry about this matter, because his oppressors will soon receive the answer to their deeds. This final verse of the sūra is an answer to the verse of the same sūra in which the sorrow of the Prophet is mentioned, "Perchance thou consumest thyself that they are not believers." The Prophet shows in the Sūra of Poets that the community of believers wishes to accompany him on the way of Unity. Ibn Sina, in following this same style, first speaks of his pain, sorrow and isolation in the beginning of the treatise without directly describing it

and, at the end, erects a wall between himself and those who in appearance claim to be his friend but do not believe in him and assume that he is insane. He then adduces the verse of the *Qur'ān* as his perfect witness. By quoting this verse he stresses the point that his pain is the same as the sorrow referred to in the sūra and delivers the good news that the remedy comes from God. Meanwhile, he also claims to have reached the station of wisdom and prophethood and that it is for this reason they reject him. The words at the end of his *hadīṯ* give testimony of the truth of the matter, "Now we are on the path accompanied by the messenger." In his other treatises, like *Risāla-yi nafs*, the *Dāniš-nāma* on the natural sciences and even *Mi'rāj-nāma,* he clearly states that the end of the way of the traveler is union with the Universal Intellect and the attaining of the state of prophethood.

Thus the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* only partially resembles *Ḥayy ibn Yaqżān* and *Mi'rāj-nāma*, because while he uses allegory in the treatise, he does not explicate it openly as he does in *Mi'rāj-nāma*. He uses allegory to illustrate the aim of the way of life which he proposes in the testament (*waṣīyya*) in the same manner that a person recounts a subject in a reasoning and exact manner and, in order to explain it further, adduces a parable. The *hadīṯ* or allegorical section of the treatise plays an illustrative role for the explanatory and descriptive sections, while the other parts provide a paraphrase of the *hadīṯ* rather than a word for word commentary.

CHAPTER VII

The *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and *Kalīla wa Dimna*

Another important source of inspiration to Ibn Sina in writing the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* was the book of *Kalīla wa Dimna* in general and its tale of the ring-dove and her friends in particular. The correctness of this claim will be borne out by establishing the central importance and influence of this work at the time of Ibn Sina and even more so by a detailed comparison of the form and content of the two texts. First, however, I will give a short history of *Kalīla wa Dimna* as well as of Ibn al-Muqaffa', the translator who rendered it into Arabic, and suggest that there are definite similarities between his philosophy and that of Ibn Sina.

A. A short history of *Kalīla wa Dimna*

Kalīla wa Dimna is the name of a famous work which was translated for the first time from Pahlavi into Arabic in the second century after the *Ḥijra* by an Iranian man of letters named Rūzbih son of Dādūya, known as 'Abdallāh Ibn al-Muqaffa'. According to the tradition of the physician Burzūya, a summary of whose life appears at the beginning of *Kalīla wa Dimna,* the book was brought to Iran from India at the command of the Sasanian ruler, Xusrau I, called Anūšīrwān (531-579 C. E.).

The title of the book was taken from the names of the two jackals Kalīla and Dimna (*Kalīlag* and *Damnag* in Pahlavi; in Sanskrit *Damanaka* means 'introduction' and *Karataka,* which is the same as Kalīla, means 'impudent'), who are the protagonists of the first story of the book (The lion and the ox). It is doubtful, if a book with exactly the same collection of stories as found in *Kalīla wa Dimna* ever existed in the Sanskrit literature.[1] This was already questioned by Ibn an-Nadīm who, even maintains in the *Fihrist* that the stories of *Kalīla wa Dimna* were originally Iranian and that they were gradually discovered by the Indians.[2]

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[1] Cf. Latham, "Ibn al-Muqaffa' and early 'Abbasid prose," *Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, p. 51.

[2] Cf. Ibn an-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, p. 304.

The truth is more complicated than Ibn an-Nadīm supposed and the oldest model which can be found for the five first stories of *Kalīla wa Dimna* is the *Pančatantra* of which the earliest tradition is a collection called *Tantrākhyāyika,* which was composed around two hundred years before the Christian era in Kashmir.[3] A manuscript containing these narratives is kept in the Deccan College in Poona.[4] Brockelmann accepts the opinion of Hertel and dates the composition of the above-mentioned work to around the year 300 of the Christian era. In the same article he states that, beside the stories which have been taken from the *Pančatantra*, there are three more stories in *Kalīla wa Dimna* which come from the Indian epic poem, the *Mahābhārata*. Further, Brockelmann accepts the opinion of De Sacy that five more of the stories have no parallel in the Sanskrit literature but that there is no doubt that they also have Indian roots.[5] Indu Shekhar, the translator of *Pančatantra* into Persian, and Xānlarī believe that these five stories are probably of Iranian provenance and that they were added to the collection of stories by Burzūya or the compiler of *Kalīla wa Dimna* and enlarged and recast by Ibn al-Muqaffa' to provide comments on pressing problems of his day.[6]

One must keep in mind the fact that in the past there was no idea of a faithful translation which fully rendered the original text but that the translator generally added some of his own thoughts and attitudes to the original text; these were most often to be seen in the context of his own period. Therefore it can be expected that Burzūya and ibn al-Muffaqa' (d. 757 C. E.) each contributed in some way to the manner of description or in the modifications or enlargement of the text they translated.[7]

The book of *Kalīla wa Dimna* was translated from Pahlavi into Syriac around the year 570 C. E., about 200 years before the rendering by Ibn al-Muqaffa', by an Iranian man of letters named Būd.[8] Keith-Falconer, in the introduction to his English translation of the later Syriac version of *Kalīla wa Dimna,* refers to the point made by Nöldeke when he says: "The translator, Būd, was a Persian Christian acquainted with Syriac, not that he was a Syriac familiar with Persian."[9] No one knew of the existence of the old version of Syriac *Kalīla wa Dimna* until the year 1870 when the work was discovered in a monastery in Mārdīn.[10]

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[3] Cf. Brockelmann, "Kalīla wa- Dimna," *EI2*, vol. IV, p. 503; cf. De Blois, *Voyage to India,* p.1.

[4] Cf. Indu Shekhar, *Pančatantra*, p. 7.

[5] Cf. Brockelmann, "Kalīla wa-Dimna," *EI2*, vol. IV, p. 503.

[6] Cf. Buxārī, *Dāstānhā-yi Bīdpāy*, ed. Xānlarī and Raušan, p. 10.

[7] Cf. Brockelman, *ibid.,* p. 503; Lathman, *ibid.*, p. 51.

[8] Cf. Keith-Falconer, *Kalīlah and Dimnah*, p. XLII.

[9] Keith-Falconer, *Kalīlah,* p. XLIII.

[10] Cf. Keith-Falconer, *ibid.,* p. XLIV.

The first translation of *Kalīla wa Dimna* into Arabic was made by Ibn al-Muqaffa', who was known for his excellence in eloquence and rhetoric. The first known mention of the Arabic *Kalīla wa Dimna* occurs in *'Uyūn al-axbār*. Ibn Qutaiba (d. 276 A. H.) from Dinawar (a province in Iran) quotes from Ibn al-Muqaffa' and *Kalīla wa Dimna* several times in his *'Uyūn al-axbār*.[11] Brockelmann, emphasizes: "Ibn al-Mukaffa''s edition was originally a stylistic work of art intended for literary connoisseurs; but because of the nature of its contents it soon became very popular and therefore much corrupted in transmission. Even the numerous quotations in Ibn Kutayba's *'Uyūn al-Akhbār* already no longer reproduce Ibn al-Mukaffa''s text word for word."[12] The question here is how Brockelmann could judge the incorrectness of Ibn Qutaiba's text when the Arabic translation of Ibn al-Muqaffa' is not extant and the earliest manuscript of the version of *Kalīla wa Dimna* attributed to Ibn al-Muqaffa' is from 618 A. H. (1221 A. D.)[13]

Aṭ-Ṭabarī, (d. 321 A. H.), the historian, reports the existence of *Kalīla wa Dimna* in a much earlier time than his own, when he speaks of the Afšīn of Ušrusana:

> "In 841, the Afshin of Ushrusana, a Central Asian Turkish prince, was prosecuted for possessing idols and a gold and silver illuminated non-Moslem sacred book. When questioned by the judge about this book, the Afshin replied that he had inherited [it] from 'barbarian ancestors'. The Afshin also pointed out that the judge owned such a work, a *Kalīla wa Dimna.*"[14]

Besides, in the *Rasā'il ixwān aṣ-ṣafā,* which were written about the time of aṭ-Ṭabarī, several citations from *Kalīla wa Dimna* are found. The relation between the *Rasā'il* and *Kalīla wa Dimna* is so strong that Goldziher believed that even the designation of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* was derived from the story of the ring-dove.

The Dutch scholar, H. A. Schultens, was the first European scholar to publish a portion of the Arabic version of the *Kalīla wa dimna* (the chapter of the lion and the ox) in 1786. The Arabic version as a whole was first published by De Sacy as *Calila et Dimna ou Fables de Bidpai en Arabe* in Paris in 1816. Guidi was the third European scholar to publish an edition of *Kalīla wa Dimna* with the title *Studii testo arabo del libro di Calila e Dimna,* which appeared in 1873. Just a few years later, in

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[11] Cf. for example, *'Uyūn al-axbār*, vol. I, p. 168; *ibid.*, vol. II, p. 9, 121; *ibid.*, vol. II, I, p. 15, 192.

[12] Brockelmann, "Kalīla wa-Dimna," *EI2*, vol. IV, p. 503.

[13] For information about the oldest Arabic Ms., see Buxārī, *Dāstānhā,* , p. 12; cf. Irving, *Kalīlah and Dimnah*, p. XIII. , p. 12; cf. Irving, *Kalīlah and Dimnah*, p. XIII.

[14] Cited by Cowen, *Kalīla wa Dimna*, p. 12.

1879, Nöldeke published his version of *Kalīla wa Dimna, Die Erzählung vom Mäusekönig und seinen Ministern.* In the Arab world *Kalīla wa Dimna* was first published in Cairo in 1249 A. H.

The oldest reference to the existence of *Kalīla wa Dimna* in Persian literature is found in *Muqaddama-yi Šāh-nāma-yi Abū Manṣūrī* (Introduction to the *Šāh-nāma* by Abū Manṣūr). According to Qazwīnī, this text, which was written around the year 346 A. H., is the oldest extant example of Persian prose after the advent of Islam.[15] In this work the author states that *Kalīla wa Dimna* was brought from India at the time of Xusrau Anūšīrwān and translated into Pahlavi by the physician Burzūya and subsequently translated from Pahlavi into Arabic by Ibn al-Muqaffa' during the reign of al-Ma'mūn, the son of Hārūn ar-Rašīd. (In fact this occurred earlier at the beginning of the reign of Abū Ja'far Manṣūr Dawāniqī). According to the same source, Naṣr ibn Aḥmad, the Samanid king, ordered his vizier, Bal'amī, to translate *Kalīla wa Dimna* back into Persian from Arabic so that the book could be made available to the people and all could enjoy it. Then he commissioned Rūdakī to turn the treatise into verse.

Further Abū Manṣūr recounts that by making a versified version of *Kalīla wa Dimna* the book was quoted by great and small and the name of Rūdakī was made immortal by the poem. He also mentions that the book was known as far as China where it had been illustrated and thus provided pleasure both as a text and in pictorial form.[16] From the testimony of contemporary sources it can be established that the versification of *Kalīla wa Dimna* was considered to be Rūdakī's most important work. It can be inferred from Firdausī in the *Šāh-nāma* that Rūdakī was blind when he became acquainted with *Kalīla wa Dimna.* He reports that someone read it to him and he transformed the story into verse. According to Firdausī *Kalīla wa Dimna* had not been translated into Persian previously.

It is obvious from the introduction to the *Šāh-nāma* that the Persian *Kalīla wa Dimna* was versified by Rūdakī (died 329 A.H.)[17] at least fifty years before the birth of Ibn Sina in the region of Xurāsān and that it was popularly quoted by the whole population. In other words, by giving *Kalīla wa Dimna* a verse form even persons who were illiterate could hear the tales of the book, commit them to memory and preserve them. Another point is that it can be inferred from the contents of the introduction that, at the time of Ibn Sina and earlier in the region of Xurāsān and other regions inhabited by Iranians, only students and

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[15] Cf. Qazwīnī, *Bīst maqāla*, p. 17.

[16] Cf. Qazwīnī, *ibid.*, p. 21 ff.

[17] Brockelmann gives another date for Rūdakī's death: 304/916. Cf. Brockelmann, "Kalīla wa-Dimna," *EI2*, vol. IV, p. 504.

scholars were familiar with Arabic. Therefore the Samanid king ordered important books, including *Kalīla wa Dimna,* to be translated into Persian as a service to the population who did not know Arabic. One need only evoke the translation into Persian of the history and the *Tafsīr* of aṭ-Ṭabarī, two of the monumental translations of the epoch.

It is therefore safe to assume that *Kalīla wa Dimna* was known by the ordinary people of the streets and markets of Iran because of the translation into Persian and subsequent versification. Unfortunately nothing is left today of the Persian poem of *Kalīla wa Dimna* by Rūdakī except for a few verses which have been quoted by Asadī Ṭūsī in his *Luġat-i furs.*[18]

Ibn al-Muqaffa''s work was translated into Persian again at the time of Bahrām-šāh of Ġazna. Niżām ad-dīn Abu'l-Ma'ālī Naṣrullāh ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abdu'l-Ḥamīd was commissioned by the Ġaznavid ruler, Bahrām-šāh, to make a revised editon of *Kalīla wa Dimna* in Persian. Although Naṣrullāh's translation is the closest in flavor to Ibn al-Muqaffa''s work according to Mīnuvī, there are a few points which led me not to choose this translation as a reference in this study. First, Naṣrullāh, following the tradition of his time, added many rhetorical adornments and produced a mannered prose which reflects the taste of the court, and while it is a good example of twelfth-century Persian belles-lettres, it cannot serve as a faithful rendering of Ibn al-Muqaffa''s work, because Naṣrullāh condensed and clarified the meaning of the text, expanded the discussion with several verses from the *Qur'ān* and tradition, and adorned Persian prose and Arabic poetry.[19]

There is, however, another Persian translation of *Kalīla wa Dimna*, entitled *Dāstānhā-yi Bīdpāy*. This Persian translation, which was unknown until recently, had been made by Muḥammad ibn 'Abdullāh, known as Buxārī. According to the colophon of the Ms. it was copied in 544 A. H. Xānlarī, who has edited and published the Ms., believes that the translation and the copying of the text took place about the same time.[20] He is also certain that this Persian translation is as old as *Kalīla wa Dimna-yi Bahrām-šāhī*. According to Xānlarī, Naṣrullāh's translation was made around the years 538-540 A. H. and the oldest Ms. copy of this work is from 551 A. H.[21]

I have chosen *Dāstānhā-yi Bīdpāy* as my reference, not only because of its clear language but chiefly for its faithfulness to the work of Ibn al-Muqaffa', as is mentioned by the author in his introduction. He stresses that he would have liked to expand or adorn the phrases but that he

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[18] For a few examples see Asadī Ṭusī, *Luġat-i furs*, pp. 6, 25, 38.

[19] Cf. Buxārī, *Dāstānhā*, p. 20.

[20] Buxārī, *Dāstānhā*, p. 20

[21] Cf. Buxārī, *Dāstānhā*, p. 21.

followed his orders.[22] This implies that he did not expand the work of Ibn al-Muqaffa'.

Thus it has been established that the text of the *Dāstānhā-yi Bīdpāy* in the translation of Buxārī is the authoritative source of this chapter. The *Kalīla wa Dimna* of Bahrām-šāh edited by 'Abdul-'Aẓīm Qarīb is the second source. For the Arabic references the text edited by Cheikho will be used. I chose the Cheikho's edition because its authenticity is approved by many scholars.[23] This edition is based on a Ms. which is the second oldest copy, dated 739/1338.[24] For the English translation of *Kalīla wa Dimna* I have used Keith-Falconer's translation which is a translation of the later Syriac text of *Kalīla wa Dimna.*

B. Burzūya, Ibn al-Muqaffa' and Ibn Sina and their relation to *Kalīla wa Dimna*

All of Ibn Sina's biographers agree to the fact that his father belonged to the Isma'īlī sect. In such a household one can be almost certain that his sons were acquainted with works containing Isma'īlī ideas and philosophy as well as with *Kalīla wa Dimna,* which was an old and familiar work which was widespread among the common people because of Rūdakī's versified interpretation. Therefore I maintain that there is no doubt that Ibn Sina was acquainted with *Kalīla wa Dimna* either in Arabic or Persian. It has also been firmly established that the Isma'īlīs, like the Manicheans, used parables, allegories and stories abundantly in the propagation of their religion and philosophy. They used this method to make their ideology comprehensible to the common people, who had little training in abstract theological or philosophical reasoning.

In this historical context it is not surprising that *Kalīla wa Dimna* in the translation by Ibn al-Muqaffa', who was accused of heresy, and the versified adaptation by Rūdakī, who was accused of sympathy for the Isma'īlī faith, was popular in the home of an avowed Isma'īlī. Besides, the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā*, who were considered to be the first masters and teachers of Ibn Sina, have adopted much from this work in their own writings both as regards form and content and thus opened the way for Ibn Sina.

In conclusion Ibn Sina certainly had a very thorough knowledge of *Kalīla wa Dimna*. Therefore it can be reasoned that he found inspiration

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[22] Cf. Buxārī, *ibid.*, p. 21.

[23] Cf. De Blois, *Voyage to India,* p. 3.

[24] The oldest known dated Ms. which was found in Ayasofya, by 'Azzām, is dated 1221 C. E. Based on this Ms., he published an edition of the text, which seemed to be an opaque reflection of his manuscript. Cf. De Blois, *Voyage,* p. 4.

in *Kalīla wa Dimna* in general, and in the story of the ring-dove and her friends in particular, for his *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. The question is which version of *Kalīla wa Dimna* Ibn Sina had access to in writing the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. This cannot be known for sure, because the earliest extant manuscript of Arabic translation of *Kalīla wa Dimna* is dated 618 A. H and the earliest extant manuscript of Persian translation, *Kalīla wa Dimna-yi Bahrām-šāhī*, was made around 538-540 A. H. by Naṣrullāh Munšī and copied a few years later in 551 A. H., which is one hundred and at least twenty years after the death of Ibn Sina.

There is, however, a possibility that Ibn Sina had access to a version of the *Pančatantra,* whether it was a written translation or in the form of stories which were in circulation and spread orally. The reason for this suggestion is the striking resemblance between some parts of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and the chapter on friendship in the *Pančatantra.* In fact these passages appear to be closer to the wording of the *Pančatantra* than to any extant version of Ibn al-Muqaffa"s *Kalīla wa Dimna.* It is interesting in this context to consider the two Syriac versions. The older of these versions resembles the one in Arabic attributed to Ibn al-Muqaffa' and *Kalīla wa Dimna-yi Bahrām-šāhī* rather than the *Pančatantra.* A comparison between the *Risāla* and the later Syriac version, however, shows that the later Syriac version and the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* are dependent on the same tradition. This Syriac version was first edited by Wright in 1884 and translated by Keith-Falconer in 1885. First Wright and then Keith-Falconer emphasize that the Syriac translation was made around the tenth or eleventh century C. E. from an Arabic version which is no longer extant.[25] This would imply that the Arabic version existed at the time of Ibn Sina. Thus Ibn Sina must have had access to a version of *Kalīla wa Dimna* which was closer to the later Syriac version than the one attributed to Ibn al-Muqaffa'. This will be illustrated in the coming comparison of the contents of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and *Kalīla wa Dimna.*

The autobiography of Ibn Sina presents the ideal life of a master as a means of instructing his students. As was mentioned before, this was a tradition that can be traced back to a long time before Ibn Sina. In the *Kalīla wa Dimna* translated by Ibn al-Muqaffa' there is an account of Burzūya's life which is similar to the account of Ibn Sina's life in many respects. The question is if it was a tradition known in Iran before the rise of Islam or if Ibn al-Muqaffa' introduced it into the world of Islam.

According to Ibn al-Muqaffa"s translation of *Kalīla wa Dimna,* Burzūya, the physician of the court of Anūšīrwān, was the compiler and the translator of the book from Sanskrit into Pahlavi.

The question of whether Burzūya really existed and was responsible for bringing the work from India to Iran has aroused much discussion

[25] Keith-Falconer, *Kalīlah*, p. LIX.

among scholars, each of them presenting arguments for or against this. Among those who believe that Burzūya was a fictive person one can quote Latham's remark about Nöldeke, who believed that the chapter on the life of Burzūya was the product of Ibn al-Muqaffa''s own pen.[26] This fact is also mentioned by Keith-Falconer, who holds that the old Syriac version of *Kalīla wa Dimna* was translated from Pahlavi rather than Sanskrit.[27] He implies that as there is no chapter on the life of Burzūya in the old Syriac version, it must not have been found in the Pahlavi version either. Therefore the chapter must have been added by Ibn al-Muqaffa' himself.

Christensen in *L'Iran sous les sassanides* first reports Nöldeke's opinion that the spirit of the biography of Burzūya is closer to the time of Ibn al-Muqaffa' than to the era of Anūšīrwan, when Burzūya is purported to have lived, and therefore the introduction about Burzūya must be from the pen of Ibn al-Muqaffa' himself. Christensen, who does not agree with Nöldeke, believes that Burzūya is the best representative of the influence of Indian thought which found its way into Zoroastrian thought as a consequence of the continual controversies between Christians, Gnostics, Manicheans and Mazdakites, even though asceticism, seclusion and denying the world are basically contrary to the teachings of Zoroaster. He concludes that the chapter about Burzūya is a description of the evolutional journey of the wisdom of the Zoroastrians in the last century of Sasanian civilization.[28]

Against Christensen, and in agreement with Nöldeke, Muḥammad Taqī Bahār is also of the opinion that the chapter on Burzūya is new in relation to the other sections of *Kalīla wa Dimna* and remarks that at the time of Anūšīrwān faithfulness to religion, and especially to the Zoroastrian religion, was of such importance that the period was characterized by extreme fanaticism. He finds it improbable that Burzūya would be allowed to speak as explicitly and clearly as he does of his lack of respect for established religion and his rejection of religious fanaticism in these circumstances.[29]

Abū Raiḥān al-Bīrūnī (d. 544 A. H.) writes in the *Taḥqīq ma li'l-hind* that, while the *Pančatantra* is the source of *Kalīla wa Dimna,* Ibn al-Muqaffa' added the chapter about Burzūya himself in order to sow doubts among those whose faith was weak and make them receptive to the propaganda of the Manicheans.[30] According to Indu Shekhar Ibn al-Muqqafa''s aim in doing this would have been to emphasize the

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[26] Cf. Latham, "Ibn al-Muqaffa'," *Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, p. 51.

[27] Cf. Keith-Falconer, *Kalīlah*, p. XLIII.

[28] Cf. Christinsen, *L'Iran sous les sassanides,* Pers. Trans. Yāsamī, p. 463, 564.

[29] Cf. Bahār, *Sabkšināsī*, vol. II, p. 254.

[30] Cf. al-Bīrūnī, *Taḥqīq mā li-l-Hind*, p. 123.

importance of Zoroastrian customs and to keep alive the name of the Iranians of pre-Islamic times who had followed these customs and thereby preserve the original sources of works in Pahlavi.[31] Latham expresses his opinion in a similar way: "To interpret his intention as a conscious endeavor to set an entirely new literary trend would be to misinterpret his primary objective. Motivated by an evident sense of didactic mission, he was, rather, concerned to promote a cultural reorientation that would extend the political and social norms of the old order. In short, his main aim was to graft congruent Sasanian shoots upon the old Arab stock of secular culture in order to produce and regulate Arabo-Islamic culture embodying what he saw as a proven, potent strain of political wisdom."[32]

Before expressing my opinion on the relation of the chapter on the physician Burzūya to Ibn al-Muqaffa' I would like to examine the first chapter of the book, namely, how *Kalīla wa Dimna* was brought to Iran, and see what light it can shed on this question.

According to the account in *Kalīla wa Dimna,* Burzūya is a physician who advances from studying the body to studying the soul and step by step manages to tame his soul and ultimately succeeds in elevating it to the highest level. In order to reach this goal he cares for his patients without expectation of reward and, according to his own words, traps his own avarice in a snare. Secondly, he recognizes his own place and never experiences jealousy towards others, thirdly, he avoids the company of men who are below him. He turns his attention to the effort which he describes as:

> "Throw this thick body into activity, because the body has a weak foundation and the four humors are boiling within it so that is, if the soul did not bring them together and hold them, would fall apart, like a statue which has fallen apart with the pieces scattered. When you put it together and put each member in its own place and join them together with a nail its form will be perfect. When the nail is removed from it, it will become dismembered"[33]

and he recounts how he advanced from medicine of the body to medicine of the soul: "It occurred to me that there must be a medicine which would yield eternal fruit. I saw that this had no meaning except in the exercising of religion, because everyone who becomes alive through religion never experiences death."[34] When Burzūya then states that he does not believe in religion based on command or predestination, which

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[31] Cf. Indu Shekhar, *Pančatantra*, p. 19.

[32] Latham, "Ibn al-Muqaffa'," *Abbasid Bells-Lettres*, p. 53.

[33] Buxārī, *Dāstānhā*, p. 58 f.

[34] Buxārī, *ibid.*, p. 61.

is hypocritical, or which is exercised in imitation or has been inherited he is expressing a viewpoint which closely parallels that of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* and Ibn Sina. He describes this in the following words:

> "Some have inherited [their religion] from their fathers and have grasped the branch of imitation [of their forefathers] and some have construed a religion of predestination and coercion and fear and pleasure and have directed their lives toward this. Still others have recognized the trap of worldly goods and desire and directed their lives towards the search for status and rank. Everyone I saw and questioned gave me the following answer: 'I adhere to the truth and my opponents have remained with their foot in the trap of ignorance and error.'" [35]

The account of Burzūya's life describes how he sought out the leaders of every religion and joined in discussion with each of them in order to understand the truth. Ultimately he arrived at the conclusion that all religious leaders were fanatical and that none of them spoke the truth. Each one considers that he represents the truth and that the others are in error. Subsequently he makes the decision to follow his own path toward the lights without imitating others.[36]

Thereafter Burzūya, while avoiding the path of imitation of established religion, gives himself up to abstinence in order to arrive at knowledge and comprehend the luminous world of truth. He spends years in asceticism and mortification. Then he begins to doubt the efficacy of abstinence and seclusion and wonders whether this method, despite all its virtues, is truly the ultimate solution to the problem.

He returns to the world which appears to be of even less value than before. As a result he returns for the second time to his own world of loneliness and meditation. At the end of this chapter he compares the world to a well in which four snakes, corresponding to the four humors, dwell with open mouths ready to destroy mankind. A man in fear of his life seeks refuge in that well and sees a roaring dragon below his feet. He grasps two branches which are growing on two sides of the well in hope of salvation but fails to notice that two mice, one white and one black, are gnawing away at them. In the meantime he finds a beehive with honey and eats of the honey. He becomes so engrossed in experiencing the pleasure and sweetness of the honey that he does not see that the mice have cut through the branches and he is thrown into the open mouth of the dragon.

In comment the narrator says that the two branches are the tree of life of the human being and the two mice represent time. One is night and the other day who constantly gnaw at the branches; the dragon is death and

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[35] Buxārī, *ibid.*, p. 61.

[36] Buxārī, *ibid.*, p. 61.

the honey symbolizes passion. The ignorant person drowns himself in his own ignorance and as a result he is destroyed instead of following the road to salvation. Burzūya says that when he understood all this and became conscious of the danger of death he renounced passion and set his course towards wisdom. On the way he resuscitated his heart with the water of knowledge and gave it nourishment.[37]

Thus the life of Burzūya, who is in reality a model created in the mind of Ibn al-Muqaffa', illustrates the life of a physician and ascetic sage famous for his knowledge. Religious fanaticism has no place in his life. He believes that the individual can find his own way to inner light through self-discipline, mortification, and retirement from the world and spiritual exercises and that, in fact, the inner light can be his leader and guide in these matters. He does not speak of the need for a teacher or a spiritual guide, because this would be a form of imitation, inheritance, fate or hypocrisy of religion and of no value. His principle that one must exercise mortification and not heed the world and its passions in order to gain wisdom and acquire knowledge was a source of inspiration in the philosophy of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* as also to Ibn Sina, who advocates such behavior in his *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and *al-Išārāt wa't-tanbīhāt.*

In the biography of Burzūya, the physician who first masters medicine and then turns to the science of the soul, spiritual worlds and inner light, it is possible to discern the same pattern as in the life of Ibn Sina and other philosophers. Like Burzūya, Ibn Sina was born of educated parents, began to study at an early age and soon distinguished himself. He quickly mastered the natural sciences and then broached the subject of metaphysics. Although he is not known to have observed abstinence and mortification or led a life which was outwardly ascetic, it can be tacitly understood from his biography that he was prepared to give up worldly attachments and abandon his possessions at any moment and set out on a new journey. He never married nor had children and his life consisted of a series of stages in the understanding of the successive levels of science and knowledge. This culminated when he reached a new dimension in mystical depths during the last years of his life. His peripatetic life at the courts of various amirs exposed him to the danger of death, but at the same time gave him the opportunity to diffuse his teachings without obstacle and to influence men of power. Even this aspect of life is not absent from the biography of Burzūya, the first physician supposed to have written or dictated his own life story.

The question can be asked whether both descriptions could have been written under the influence of the biographies of Aristotle which circulated in the Middle East before and after the advent of Islam. They were certainly familiar to Ibn al-Muqaffa' as one of the first translators

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[37] Buxārī, *Dāstānhā,* p. 69 f.

of this kind of literature into Arabic. My conclusion is, therefore, that Ibn al-Muqaffa' wrote the biography of Burzūya in the manner of Aristotle and added his own philosophic beliefs and tenets to it. In other words he mixed Bīdpāy and Aristotle and created a new personality in harmony with the spirit and instruction of *Kalīla wa Dimna*. Thus Burzūya's life can be seen as the model of the teaching which is presented in the book.

Burzūya was possibly a fictive character who was invented by Ibn al-Muqaffa'. Following the tradition of the time, Ibn al-Muqaffa' made an attempt to exemplify the ideals of the religion of philosophy with this character. The religion of philosophy was supposed to be a religion in which no prejudice of any kind was allowed and the love of knowledge was fostered among its followers. Moreover a follower of this way of life was taught to purify himself by means of certain ascetic practices. This scholarly movement within early Islam involved basically the principles of three schools of thought, namely Hellenistic philosophy, transmitted through Syriac scholarship, the Šari'a of Islam and certain ideals borrowed from India. Ibn al-Muqaffa', in creating the chapter on the life of Burzūya, illustrates the three basic elements of the religion of philosophy by his condemnation of prejudice, his ascetic life style and his love of knowledge.

The ideals of the religion of philosophy became widely spread when al-Kindī (185/796-260/873), the first recognized Muslim philosopher, inspired by Greek philosophy, pointed it out.[38] Isma'īlīs, following the same tradition, presented a religio-philosophical theory which formed the basis of their movement. *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* openly professed the religion of philosophy which consisted of the same elements of tolerance, love of knowledge and asceticism. Like Burzūya they specify that these elements make up the goal of the religion of philosophy. Ibn Sina, inspired by the chapter on the life of Burzūya, followed the same footsteps in writing his autobiography.

C. A comparison of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and *Kalīla wa Dimna*

Before presenting a comparison of the story of the ring-dove in *Kalīla wa Dimna* and the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* it is important to observe that this story forms the second section of the book of *Kalīla wa Dimna* just as in the

[38] Cf. al-Kindī, *Rasā'il al-Kindī al-fasafīya*, ed. M. 'Abdu'l-Hādī Abū Zayda, p. 172.

original version of the *Pančatantra*. In the *Pančatantra* it is called "Winning friends" and in *Kalīla wa Dimna,* even though the title of the story is "The ring-dove, crow, mouse, tortoise and gazelle", it is known as a discourse on solidarity.

The story follows upon one about discord between friends in the *Pančatantra* which corresponds to "The ox and the lion" in *Kalīla wa Dimna*. The story of discord between friends concerns an ox who has thrown off the yoke of slavery to humans and acquired freedom. His loud voice inspires fear in a lion in his vicinity who trembles whenever he hears it. The lion assumes that the unseen animal is huge and deadly. A jackal seeking fame and prestige discovers the secret fear of the lion and correctly guesses the cause. By a ruse he leads the fearful ox to see the fearful lion. Gradually the two animals become such good friends that the jackal Dimna is excluded from the intimate company of the lion. By means of another ruse that leads to the death of the ox, Dimna regains his coveted position near the lion and in the end acquires power and high rank. Thus he succeeds in turning the cowardice and fear of the two animals into an advantage for himself.

This story provides a discussion of friendship based on selfish motives. The lion in his egoism is terrified of losing his position as king, and as a result of his preoccupation with this feeling of fear and lack of security he is easily duped by Dimna and kills his friend impetuously by his own hand. In the first chapter the Brahman (Bīdpāy) explains that the heart of the lion is a place of insecurity and that the lord of strength has reserved only a small place in it for friendship.

> "They made the king resemble a high mountain provided with all kinds of riches and fruits but it was the place of the lion, the tiger, the boar, the leopard and the wolf. His fortune was pleasing but there were two difficulties involved: one is surmounting, which is troublesome, and the other is maintaining one's position, which is fraught with fear."[39]

At the same time the ox, who feels dread of loosing its own position and fears for its life, is also deceived by the ruses of Dimna and believes that the lion is out to kill him. In summary both friends are afraid of each other but are basically only occupied with thoughts of their own life and with deriving material profit from their friendship. Dimna seeks them both out and lets them destroy each other.

Thus where fear, fortune and the search for status are predominant, love and friendship cannot have a meaning, because the three concepts represent egoism and egoism is incompatible with purity and loyalty in

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[39] Buxārī, *Dāstānhā*, p. 77.

friendship. This story resembles the statements by Ibn Sina at the beginning of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*:

> "In fact a friend cannot purify his brother from impurity unless he has preserved his own clarity from resentment in the time of difficulty. Where is such a sincere friend for you?
> When friendship has turned into trafficking in which one returns when a need comes along and stops visiting as soon as the need is gone, a comrade is no longer visited unless a misfortune has occurred, and a friend will not be remembered unless a wish is remembered,"

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* Ibn Sina first speaks of his need for a friend and then describes worldly friendships such as between the lion and the ox or between Dimna and the lion. The lion and the ox in the first chapter of the book of *Kalila wa Dimna* become friends, because they secretly fear each other and not because of any intrinsic friendship they feel for each other. In the case of the jackal he strives to be near the lion, because he is in reality seeking status and rank. Dimna describes the lion with the following words: "This lion is weak-minded, his army is without counsel and order and I wish to advance; it will be that I will accomplish a deed which will increase my position and rank."[40] At the end of the *Pančatantra* he reaches his goal and becomes the vizier and counselor of the lion,[41] although in *Kalīla wa Dimna* he receives retribution for his immoral conduct in an inserted chapter in which an investigation is made into the circumstances surrounding his conduct. These parallels show that the story of the ox and the lion describes the same kind of worldly friendship based on egoistic desires which Ibn Sina characterizes as commerce at the beginning of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*.

After rejecting material friendships Ibn Sina goes on to confirm the value of true friendship and he calls those gathered in the circle the brothers of Truth:

> "except for the brothers of Truth who have been assembled by divine kinship and brought together by celestial closeness. They have observed the Truth with inner sight and cleansed their innermost secret from all stains of doubt. A society such as theirs will not be united except by the herald of a divine summons."

In Ibn Sina's point of view they are persons who have developed friendship with each other without egoistic and material motives. The second chapter of the *Pančatantra,* known as "Winning friends", contains the following remark on this subject: "Those who are without

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[40] Cf. Buxārī, *Dāstānhā*, p. 75.

[41] Cf. Indu Shekhar, *Pančātantra*, p. 92 f.

money and wealth but enjoy strength of understanding and the feeling of friendship like the crow, the tortoise, the gazelle and the mouse quickly reach their goal."[42] And in *Kalīla wa Dimna* it is written that the king asks of Bīdpāy: "Now I want you to give us a parable on the subject of brotherhood which gives fresh life to the union of hearts and does not accept the cutting off of those bonds, and so that one can trust their word, both theirs and that of their listeners." [43]

Bīdpāy says in defining the brothers of purity and the unanimous, sincere and true brothers: "Wise people do not value anything more than harmonious brothers even though there may be a larger gem or a more profitable gain because unanimous brothers are able to do good in all matters, and everywhere where there is trouble they apply the right of friendship".[44]

In his translation of this chapter Buxārī uses the words 'unanimous and sincere brothers' (*barādarān-i yik-dil wa yik-rang*) which render the 'brothers of purity' (*ixwān aṣ-ṣafā*) in Arabic, while in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* Ibn Sina calls them the 'brothers of truth' (*ixwān al-ḥaqīqa*). The word 'pure' (*ṣafā*) has the meaning of transparency and absence of opacity and there is little difference in meaning between it and 'truth' (*ḥaqīqa)* Human beings are unable to see the truth, because there is a veil of darkness and ignorance before the eyes of the soul which leads them astray. This veil over the soul, egoism, is rendered as Satan and ignorance and refers to everything which prevents one from seeing the inner truth. In other words it is a kind of blindness.

Purity is in reality the transparency of light and the ability to see without a veil. The person who sets himself free from the constraints of egoistic desires is able to arrive at the inner light of sight. His soul is like crystal and there is no veil distorting his vision. When a group becomes freed from the bonds of sensuality and is purified from all colors, they are able to observe their union in the cup of their hearts and together they see the theophany of the union in which they are united in everything. In other words in the rays of transparency and colorlessness of their hearts, which is the result of liberation from sensuality, they have succeeded in seeing a level of existence in relation to which the eye of the sensualist is blind. This level is called the purification of the heart and the person who attains to this purity is a person of truth (*ahl al-ḥaqīqa*), and the persons who work together to reach purity and enter upon the way of unity to reach transparency and the theophany of the interior light are called brothers of purity (*ixwān aṣ-ṣafā*) and brothers of truth (*ixwān al-ḥaqīqa*).

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[42] Cf. Indu Shekhar, *ibid.*, p. 97.

[43] Buxārī, *Dāstānhā*, p. 153.

[44] Buxārī, *ibid.*, p. 153.

In other words brothers of purity are persons who are kings in the world of the spirit and poor men in the material world. They have broken the materialistic bonds around their feet, hands and neck and they do not care for worldly or royal power, nor are they interested in the bonds of riches and do not fear anything. In the story of the ox and the lion the ox is fearful for his life and because of this he does not trust his friend and lets himself be deceived by the jackal, Dimna, and the lion is anxious about his kingship and losing his power with the result that his own hand is stained with the blood of his friend. The brothers of truth set a goal to free themselves from all of this and become like a number of bodies who share one soul with each other in harmony and solidarity, so that in the wake of their joining together their spiritual strength will be increased by the number of participating bodies. This meaning, that is the greatness and authority which is acquired on the way of unity, is well understood in the second chapter of *Kalīla wa Dimna* to judge from the contents of the story of the ring-dove and her four friends, and this is the same message which is found in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* of Ibn Sina.

Now what led me to believe that Ibn Sina had access to the Arabic translation of *Kalīla wa Dimna* which was subsequently translated into Syriac is the statement made by *Zīrak*, the mouse, in explaining friendship. As you will see, the passage is reminiscent of Ibn Sina s statement in the *Risāla.* The statement made by the mouse is,

> "There are two kinds of friendship among the dwellers in this world. One is the friendship of the soul and the other the friendship of the hands. And those who posses spiritual love, which is the genuine love, remote from all deceit and iniquity and change, [they are the sincere ones]. On the other hand, those who are bound by carnal and material love, (175) or seek (for it), those are they who desire, each one of them, to effect some robbery, and what is more than this, for sordid and transient gain. Now those who seek for carnal love resemble the fowler who sprinkled a few safflower seeds over the net so as to catch the birds with them, and sought his own advantage and not that of the birds to whom he threw the bait. but he who seeks for spiritual love, though he be far from his fellow, yet is planted in his soul and fixed in his heart by the influence of his love."[45]

In this case the mouse himself is a leader who has many friends and followers because he can provide them with food and fulfill their carnal desires, but as soon as he has no strength to provide them with their desires, they leave him and even turn against him. Thus his previous life is an example of having false companions. It is at this point that he helps the birds get rid of their snares. As a result he becomes friends with the crow, and that friendship leads him towards an association of friends who

[45] Keith-Falconer, *Kalīlah*, p. 114.

gather together on the basis of true love. Thus the life of the mouse illustrates two different aspects of friendship which is very close to what Ibn Sina implies in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. There is another statement made by the mouse which also bring to mind the words of Ibn Sina "You have no one to honor you or help you, no brother or servant or friend or neighbor, except when your purse is full, and your good things plentiful. And I see that no love (184) in this temporal state endures or is acquired except by abundance of gifts."[46] The above statements by the mouse are not found anywhere else. Now these two statements can be compared to Ibn Sina's *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*.[47]

In both books it is shown how the spiritual unity which the brothers of truth or the brothers of purity experience after subordinating bodily desires makes it easy for them to search for the way of perfection. At every level each one helps in the quest for freedom and salvation of the other and it is as though they share one existence. In order to develop this subject more I would like to compare the two texts.

D. A comparison of the symbolism of the animals in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and the story of the ring-dove

As was mentioned in the previous section the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* is made up of five parts, an introduction and four sections (*waṣīyya*, *hadīṭ*, *risāla* and *barā'a*). The introduction is about the distinction between false friends and the brothers of truth. The first section is about how this brothers are joined together (*waṣīyya*), the second section consists of a story which describes the union of the brothers of truth and their companionship on the way to the level of the angelic state or to becoming a perfect bird (*hadīṭ*). In the third section emphasis is placed on how the companions become birds and reach the station of prophethood (*risāla*). The fourth level is concerned with the refusal of the arguments of those of the author's listeners who accuse him of insanity (*barā'a*).

In the first section, testament (*waṣīyya*), Ibn Sina invokes the names of several different animals, each one of which symbolizes a certain aspect of human life. He teaches the brothers of truth that only by understanding the level represented by each particular animal and integrating it with the spiritual body can they gradually reach the angelic state. He names the hedgehog, snake, worm or ant, ostrich, viper, salamander and bat as representing behavior that can serve to guide the

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[46] Keith-Falconer, *Kalīlahd*, p. 119.

[47] Cf. the statement in the previous page of this study.

brothers of truth.[48] Ibn Sina interprets the hedgehog as a symbol of the level of withdrawal, fasting and cutting ones bonds with society. It is a period in which the individual dons a stinking garment and frightens the enemy, Satan, who confronts him in the form of attention from friends. The thorns of his clothing announce his intention to seek solitude and, by putting things into perspective, escape from the station of egoism.

Next is the snake who dwells under the ground. Although he is known as the guardian of the gems hidden in the heart of the earth, he can shed his skin anywhere and at any time and leave it behind. He provides an example to the travelers of truth who must be ready to let go of any attachment, so that they can gradually learn to fly. The ant or worm is the symbol of the serenity of the soul and provides a lesson in humility for the brothers who should consider themselves and their souls to be of such little value that they pass unseen in the world. The scorpion represents vigilance against the deceptions of the devil to make the individual proud of his faculties and even of his humility. Ibn Sina provides the symbol of the scorpion to teach the brothers of truth that they should always sleep lightly, like an armed soldier at war, and watch with eyes at the backs of their heads if they are to advance on the way. Then he tells the brothers of truth that they must exercise caution and never leave tracks, because the enemy will recognize their footprints and snare them. For that same reason he also says that they must become birds and never settle in a nest.

Ibn Sina tells the brothers of truth to swallow hot stones like the ostrich, meaning that they should swallow the spite and rage with which they burn and destroy the outer world, so that they can devote themselves to the work of burning inner defilement. In other words he teaches that the soldiery and armament which was introduced at the level of the scorpion should not be made to serve blind personal vengeance but that they, like the ostrich, should swallow their rage and use that energy in the elevation and illumination of the self. Then he recommends that the brothers of truth enter into the state of the viper and eat bones. Eating bones and turning hard material into soft food is a necrophagous symbol which refers to the lowering of the faculty of passion. The mystics held that each time sexual desire was warded off, a leaf of the life of the individual was removed and the energy, when redirected towards the interior, would support life and the individual would acquire innumerable abilities.

Further, at the station of the salamander the individual who is not afraid of burning takes on the nature of fire, and in the end, like pure gold, he swallows the touchstone and comes out of the test with head

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[48] This subject has been discussed in detail with a description of the symbols of these animals in the last chapter of the first part in this study.

high. Here it is necessary to recall that the fire is in fact a means of weighing the measure of purity of a brother of truth. It recalls the story of Abraham in the *Qur'ān,* where he steps into the fire with authority and faith and the fire turns into a rose-garden for him. Finally, there is the station of the bat which symbolizes the station of celestial beings. The individual becomes a resident of the night, a symbol of the world of the unseen (*ġaib*) and learns the secrets of that world. He finds a place in the cave in the mountains, where he stays safely out of sight without contact with ordinary individuals.

In this series of images based on the traditional way of characterizing different animals, Ibn Sina gives a short sketch of the way or stations which must be reached and transcended by persons who are seeking to arrive at the station of the perfect truth or the angelic state. After this he introduces his story of the birds which is obviously inspired by the story of the ring-dove in *Kalīla wa Dimna* in order to present his subject in another light. Before we discuss the similarities between the two stories it is necessary to recall that already in the story of the friends in *Kalīla wa Dimna* the mouse, tortoise, gazelle, crow and dove are symbols of various dimensions of the human being. The crow in this story is necrophagous like the viper in the second section of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. He represents the person who, instead of spreading his passion outside himself and letting it bring about his death, applies it to the interior whereby it gives him life; for this reason he is famous for his longevity. In fact he does not fall into the trap of the hunter in this story but is always in search of better ways of keeping out of his reach. He keeps himself hidden from the hunter and follows after the ring-doves in *Kalīla wa Dimna* in order to see if the birds who fly off with the snare will enter the house of the mouse. The crow in *Kalīla wa Dimna* says on this subject: "In any case I will follow them to see what will happen, because I am not sure that one day I won't fall into a trap like this", meaning that he is always fleeing from death and always on the lookout for means of salvation. The crow is interested in striking up a friendship with the mouse for two reasons. One is that he sees that the mouse is successful in his ability to cut to pieces the snare laid out by the hunter of death and the second is that the mouse is prudent like himself.

An interesting point in the story of *Kalīla wa Dimna* is that the mouse is named *Zīrak*. He has built a hundred passages through which he can flee. When the crow sees how the mouse rescues the birds, his desire to become friends with him increases. He goes to the entry of his hole and calls him, by the same name that the dove had called him, but the mouse, like the ant or worm in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*, is hidden below the ground and cannot be seen. He is cautious and wary like the scorpion and he is familiar with gold and jewels like the snake, but in time of necessity he is

able to abandon all and run. Thus the mouse in *Kalīla wa Dimna* and the snake, scorpion, ant or worm of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*, resemble each other in the way they behave. Another point is that it is normal for crows to hunt and kill mice and the mouse knows this. For this reason he is very reluctant to put his trust in the crow and he subjects him and his friendship to the touchstone of intelligent prudence. In other words the mouse is the symbol of the person who is completely reasonable, cautious and careful, and who has learned his lesson through time and accumulated experience.

There is a big difference between the friendship of the ox and the lion in the first chapter and the crow and the mouse in this chapter. Here the crow and the mouse are both intelligent and each is aware of his own weaknesses. They do not try to deceive themselves or each other but try to choose what is right. The crow is in control of his carnal self as he is aware that the knowledge that the mouse has is of more value to him than the food of a few moments. He values the knowledge higher than the lust of his stomach or, in other words, has advanced to a level above his carnal self and has come one step nearer the world of truth. The crow knows that if he wants to become a friend of the mouse in order to gain the knowledge of salvation from death he must become spiritual in order to know the truth. The mouse knows that the crow could be a threat to his life and therefore does not feel at ease in showing him friendship and trust but still does not completely refuse to trust him. He remains ensconced in his fortress warily listening to the speech of the crow, who does his utmost to win the trust of the mouse and become assured of his friendship. When the mouse finally becomes convinced of the sincerity of the crow he concludes a pact of brotherhood with him. "The mouse says, 'You are right, I accept brotherhood with you' but in spite of this he does not give up his cautious behavior and leave his hole. The crow says, 'Haven't we concluded an agreement of brotherhood? Why do you still not trust me?'"

The mouse says that this time it is not out of fear of him but of others of his kind. Immediately the crow makes another agreement with him, promising as a dear friend to protect him from his enemies. Thus the treaty of friendship becomes perfect. The treaty concluded by the mouse and the crow in this story is like the contract that the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* conclude with each other.[49] The circumstances of the treaty between the mouse and the crow, which can symbolize that two people from different ethnic groups, systems of thought or religions put their trust in one another, are indirectly recalled by Ibn Sina in the section of the testament (*waṣīyya*) of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*, and reflect the assembly of students he

[49] In the following chapter which will treat of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* and the influence of their treatises on the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* this subject will be discussed more fully.

kept around him with the same agreement. They formed a circle without consideration of ethnic, linguistic or religious differences and accepted solely the search for truth, knowledge and perfection as the condition for their acquaintanceship and association. At the beginning of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*, Ibn Sina stresses that persons calling themselves brothers of truth have a divine nearness and kinship. The meaning of their friendship is not to consume each other. The spiritual interpretation of the story of *Kalīla wa Dimna* is that the mouse and the crow represent two dimensions of human existence which, when trained and spiritualized, join together in flight and help each other to reach a spiritual existence. In the story of *Kalīla wa Dimna* the crow is continually cautious just as the bird in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* continually changes dwelling place so that he will not fall into the trap of the hunter. When the crow makes a treaty of partnership with the mouse he suggests that they change dwelling place.

> "The crow said to the mouse, 'O brother, we are not safe in this place, because your place is close to the road and I fear that someone will pass by us and hit me with a rock or will shoot an arrow at me and I know a place that is blossoming, pleasant and prosperous, with running water and the shade of trees in a corner of the world and in that place I have a friend, the tortoise.'"

And regarding the need for caution with the soul on the way to perfection and flight from the hunter in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*, the author says that when the birds arrive at the summit of the seventh mountain which is filled with riches and spiritual beauties they rest for a moment until they recall:

> "There is no trap like the feeling of security nor any refuge like caution, nor is any fortress to protect one against suspicions. Indeed our stay in this place has taken so long that it may result in ignorance, and behind us our enemies chase us to find our halting place. Let's get up, move and emigrate from this region. Pleasant as it is to abide here, it is even more pleasant to reach salvation."

In *Kalīla wa Dimna* the crow, wary and cautious, gets the mouse to fly in order to bring him to a land where he will be far from the hunter. In other words the mouse becomes a bird or acquires wings even though being a bird and having wings is not part of his essence. In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*, it is said in relation to this: "Be ever in flight and never settle in a nest to return to! For birds are captured in their nests. If lack of wings hinders you, get them by force and win. Indeed the best of vanguards are those who are strong in flight."

The mouse in *Kalīla wa Dimna* is greedy and he lives like an ascetic in his underground hideout. His only striving is for the gold which is hidden in the corner of his hole. He even enjoys eminence and lordship over his friends, which possession of the treasure gives him. He assures their livelihood by stealing from a monk and they show him obedience until one day when the monk, with the help of another monk, plunders his treasury. The mouse loses his strength and power in stealing as well as his lordship over the other mice as a result and he is left alone without anyone. He tries to recover his lost leadership by acquiring more gold but when he realizes that it will involve risking his life he gives up his plans and retires into the desert, where he becomes a vegetarian. It is here that he becomes acquainted with the crow. As a result of becoming acquainted with the crow he learns to fly and raises his existence to a higher level.

In comment on the symbol of the mouse in the story it can be said that he represents the avaricious spirit of the human being, which dwells in the neighborhood of religion. When following the trail of avarice leads to death, the individual realizes that he must save his soul. In destroying his own terrestrial life and protecting his soul, the crow, who is in appearance his death and who feeds on carcasses, becomes the means of granting him life and brings him to a country where he is safe from the danger of the hunter of death. Essentially, having learned how to destroy earthly greed and avarice himself, he is able to break the bonds and grant freedom from the trap of the hunter of death to the other animals. It is said in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*: "Take poison so that you may live! Love death in order that you may keep on living!"

The tortoise in the story of *Kalīla wa Dimna* is the symbol of the wise teacher who has led a long life in the shadow of generosity and wisdom. He, who is sober, intelligent and cautious by nature, is willing to risk his life for his friends in time of need. Although he cannot save his friends from death through corporeal strength, he shares his wise sayings, open heart, and the hospitality of his dwelling-place, with his friends. When the gazelle has been frightened off by the hunter and arrives at the pond where he and his friends live, she feels thirst and fear. He says to her: "If you are thirsty, drink from this water and do not be anxious because there is no fear in this place!"

In the story of the ring-dove and her friends the gazelle, who is young, innocent and very swift, is the opposite of the tortoise, but she does not yet know how to drink poison to find life and permanence. Because of her youth and beauty she is continually liable to attract the hunter to the dwelling place of her friends. In the story she is the first of the animals to fall into the trap of the hunter. Her friends set about saving her; the crow locates her in the trap, the mouse chews through the bonds

and the tortoise succeeds in driving away the hunter so that he will never again set foot in that place. The gazelle learns the lesson of dying.

In the story, while the mouse and the crow are busy saving the gazelle, the tortoise sticks his head out of his shell. The gazelle tells him not to risk his life for her, especially since it is easy for the mouse, the crow and the gazelle to flee but not for the tortoise. The tortoise replies: "At a time of trouble abandoning ones friends is not an option, because at the time of trouble there is no gift greater than the sight of one's friends."

Just as the gazelle foretold, the tortoise falls into the trap. The mouse suggests as a solution that the gazelle should pretend to be dead and the crow will sit on her body and appear to be eating the carcass, so that the hunter will be tricked into going over to what he believes is the carcass of the gazelle. At that moment the mouse will remove the bonds from his feet. When the hunter sees the situation, he believes that he is in a land of sorcery and that they will take away his life and he flees from there.

In summary, the introduction and first part of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* present a comparison between worldly friends and the true brothers and then show how the true brothers, united in spirit, help each other traverse various levels of existence. Each of the levels is represented by the symbol of an animal, and in this way they advance from the level of the beast and reach the level of the bird or the angelic state. In the story the crow, mouse, tortoise and gazelle are also seen to illustrate how the friends, who are symbols of different dimensions of human existence, transform their lives, destroy the hunter of death and find the spirit by joining together in solidarity and learning.

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*, after discussing on the subject of hypocritical and true friends and describing how to accede to the different dimensions of existence, Ibn Sina speaks of the transition from the bestial state of the self to the level of union with the state of the spirit. He illustrates this in the second part of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* (*hadīṯ*) by telling the story of the birds, how they are living in the skies without fear or threat of death, when suddenly they fall into the trap of the hunter. He goes on to tell how one of these birds succeeds, in rescuing itself and, with the help and assistance of other birds who had been rescued from their cage before him, he flees from the hunter and flies to the city of the great king.

I suggest that Ibn Sina, in composing this story in his *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*, was inspired by the story of the ring-dove. In the following section a comparison will be made between the two texts.

E. The influence of the story of ring-dove on the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*

In the story of the ring-dove, when the crow sees the hunter for the first time, he keeps himself concealed and spies on him to see what he is up to. He flies after him out of curiosity and sees how he spreads out a snare and sprinkles grain on it and then conceals himself in the bushes. Then a flock of doves appears in the sky, led and guided by their leader the ring-dove.

In the section of the story in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* of Ibn Sina the author speaks through his mouthpiece, the bird: "A party appeared in order to hunt, they spread their snares, set up their net and scattered bait and hid themselves in the bushes. I was one of the flock of birds."
The story continues as follows in *Kalīla wa Dimna:*

> "They did not see the snare and they found the scattered grain. In coveting the grain the leader made heavy attacks and fell into the snare and the others all became caught in the trap with her. Happily the hunter hurried to take them. The doves tried to escape by flapping and flying and trying."[50]

The corresponding passage in the same section of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* has:

> "When the hunters saw us, they whistled to draw our attention. We saw an agreeable amount of food and companions. No doubt entered our hearts nor suspicion kept us back from our goal. We hastened towards them (the nets) and fell down into the snares. Suddenly the rings closed around our necks, and the fetters entangled our wings, and the cords tightened around our feet. We hurried to move but what we gained was more distress."

The later Syriac version of *Kalīla wa Dimna* states "Whereupon each one of these doves studied how she might free herself."[51] This is found in all Arabic translations of *Kalīa wa Dimna* but does not occur in any Persian translation of the *Kalīa wa Dimna* including Buxārī's version. Now compare this to the text of the *Risāla* which says, "Each of us was preoccupied with his own pain and no longer cared for that of his brother." In the story of *Kalīla wa Dimna* the birds, guided by the ring-dove, understand that they must all fly together before the hunter suddenly returns and that they will have to carry the snare with them into the sky.[52] In the section of the story in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*, the birds remain in the trap and despair of their struggle. Each one becomes

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[50] Buxārī, *Dāstānhā*, p. 154.

[51] Keith-Falconer, *Kalīlah,* p. 110.

[52] Buxārī, *Dāstānhā*, p. 155.

occupied with his ordinary tasks and even becomes attached to his cage. One day one of them looks out from behind the bars of his cage and catches sight of some free birds flying with their cages and traps as it follows:

> "Then one day I looked through the meshes of the nets and I saw a group of birds that had removed their heads and wings from the fetters and had come out of the cages, ready to fly. The remainders of the old straps were still tied to their feet but it did not hinder them, for they were bound together through freedom, nor did it bother them as their lives were purified. They reminded me of what I had forgotten, and it spoiled all that to which I had become accustomed. It troubled me so that I was dissolved with grief or my soul departed from me with regret. I called and cried out to them from behind my bars to come close and teach me how to find a solution which results in the deliverance."

In comparing the two texts it can be observed that, when Ibn Sina or the bird in the cage sees the birds in flight, he sees the same birds who have fled from the hunter in *Kalīla wa Dimna* and who try to fly in order to save their lives:

> "Ḥamā'ilī looks back and sees the hunter who has not turned from behind them and goes on. She said as long as we are in the plain we go with hidden faces and he will not covet us. The solution of our problem is for us to leave the road and remain hidden in the valleys and the thickets as long as he covets us and keeps returning. When they had done this and become invisible, the hunter returned."[53]

Another observation is that in the story on securing friends in the *Pančatantra* the gazelle tells the story of his life which is similar to that of Ibn Sina's bird caught in the bonds, because it is dominated by a strong element of complaint. The gazelle recounts that he had fallen into the trap of the hunter when he was three months old, because he had not yet learned to run fast enough. The hunter carries the ensnared animal with him and gives it to the king as a gift, so that he can amuse himself with it. In the harem of the king the gazelle enjoys all the pleasures of life until one day: "During the rainy season I was asleep under the roof of the king. I heard the clamor of thunder accompanying the lightning. Suddenly my desiring heart recalled the herd of gazelles and I recited the following verse: "May that hour come when I will fall in with the herd of gazelles for like the swift wind and the heavy falling of the rain they leap and jump."[54]

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[53] Buxārī, *ibid.*, p. 155.

[54] Indu Shekhar, *Pančatantra*, p. 123.

At first the king falls ill through a misunderstanding and the gazelle is blamed. The animal is condemned to be killed but is saved at the last moment by the king on the advice of a holy man who is able to understand the language of the animals. Finally the gazelle is set free in the forest. The interesting point is that in this version of the story the thunder and lightning are the means by which the gazelle is made aware of the past. Likewise, in the *Mi'rāj-nāma* by Ibn Sina thunder and lightning are the signs of the summons of the herald of the unseen which awakens the soul, makes it aware of its state and thereby causes pain. A further similarity between the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and the *Pančatantra* is that at the beginning both the bird and the gazelle are happy in their bonds and enjoy the pleasures of the royal palace/cage, but when they are made aware and remember their origin the pleasure is transformed into trouble and pain. In the story of the securing of friends *(ā'īn-i dūstī)* in the *Pančatantra* the gazelle complains so intensively of the pain that the king thinks the pain is his own and the gazelle comes close to losing its life. He only sets the gazelle free when he has regained his health.

In the section of the story in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair,* when the imprisoned bird complains to the birds flying with their cages and asks them for help, they turn away from him:

> "They recalled the deceptions of the hunters and ran even farther away. I beseeched them in the name of old friendship, sustained companionship and preserved covenant. It touched their hearts and filled them with confidence and banished doubt from their breasts. They came to me." Then they flocked around me."

In the story of the ring-dove in *Kalīla wa Dimna* death, in the guise of the hunter, is constantly searching for the animals in order to trap them and kill them. The animals are constantly aware of him and always on the run to get away from him and prevent him from reaching his goal. Symbolically the period when the hunter spreads his snares for capturing the birds represents the period of asceticism. It corresponds to the period of trials in the life of the mouse when there is an attempt on his life, his fortune is taken from him and his supporters leave him. It is also the time when the gazelle and the tortoise are bound and represents the period in the spiritual development of the individual which is characterized by an absence of spiritual nourishment. In these circumstances it is good to find and join a circle of friends just as the crow does.

The hunter, the representative of death is the motor which sets the animals in motion with his threatening and fear-inspiring role. By fleeing from the danger represented by the hunter the animals and the birds cautiously seek out a means to escape from the danger, change their

places of dwelling and through friendship and solidarity become united and harmonious, so that in the end they can escape from him.

In relation to the role of the hunter and the dread he inspires, it is stated in the tale of the ring-dove that when the mouse chews through the bonds on the feet of the birds the crow decides to become his friend. As was described above, the crow tries very hard to gain the trust of the mouse, just as the imprisoned bird in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* tries to win the confidence of the other birds. The bird of Ibn Sina asks the free birds to trust him and teach him how to break the bonds and allow him to join them in their flight.

The crow knows that the mouse is clever and has the ability to be a friend of the birds and the strength to break bonds and free prisoners. The crow is afraid of the hunter of death and hopes that by becoming a friend of the mouse he will become united with the ability to break bonds and construct his own salvation.

In the section of the story in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*, Ibn Sina or the imprisoned bird swears an oath to the birds of the air in honor of the ancient friendship. In *Kalīla wa Dimna* the crow says: "Everything you said is known to me, and I am worthy of the union of the heart, and I am the kind of person whose good nature you can count on, and my habits are suitable and tell me the truth and you will not find me a burden."

An interesting point is that the crow calls the mouse by his secret name, *Zīrak,* that the dove used, that is, he recalled the treaty of ancient friendship between the dove and the mouse: He called the mouse by his name and said, "As I saw how you kept faith with your friends and benefited them, I experienced a desire for your brotherhood and I came to this place."[55] But just as the birds of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* could not dispel the doubt in their hearts despite the oath of the imprisoned bird, the mouse in *Kalīla wa Dimna* does not trust the crow. In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* the bird verifies his claim of honesty and in the tale in *Kalīla wa Dimna* also the crow finally succeeds in dispelling the mouse's doubts about his honesty and truthfulness. The main theme of the story is that the presence of the mouse in the assembly of friends is essential, if they are to be saved from the hunter of death.

In the section of the story in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*, the birds who fly off with the remainders of the bonds tied to their feet wish to fly to a place where they will be far from the hunter. They say:

> "There are regions ahead of us which you must cross before you will be safe. The flight took us between two flanks of a mountain of God, through a green and fertile, not a rather barren and devastated valley. We flew until we put its borders behind us. We crossed that region and reached the summit of the mountain. There in front of us

[55] Buxārī, *ibid.*, p. 156.

were eight mountains. We said to one another to hasten and not to rest until we had passed these regions."

In *Kalila wa Dimna* there is a passage which seems to be the source of inspiration to the above-mention quotation.[56]

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*, the birds say to the melodious and spiritual birds, who inhabit the eighth mountain, that they suffer pain from the snare attached to their feet and that as long as they have the snares they will not be safe from the hunter. Then the birds who dwell on the mountain lead them to the city of the great king who they hope will remove the bonds from their feet.

In the *Pančatantra* the city in which the mouse lives is called *Sarwar-zamīn* and the name of the mouse is *Zarrīn-tan*. *Zarrīn-tan* is the only animal whose physical strength disappears with the disappearance of his gold. The city in which the mouse dwells in *Kalīla wa Dimna* does not have a name.

In the *Pančatantra* and *Kalīla wa Dimna* the task of the mouse is to remove the bonds from the feet of the birds. In the story of *Kalīla wa Dimna* the mouse represents the generous and magnanimous person with liberal hospitality. He takes the purse of the dishonest monk to distribute to his needy friends. Then at the moment when he steals from his hypocritical exterior friends, who have gathered around him with the thought of their own stomachs, he is reminded of the corresponding internal friends, such as selfishness, avarice and gluttony, and he stops. It is when he experiences the death of these desires that he reaches the state of flying. They correspond to the first state in the experience of setting the ring-dove and her friends free after which they truly begin to fly with the help of the crow.

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*, the great king does not remove the bonds from the feet of the birds, but he brings them to the state of celestial being or flight. He gives them this power so they can make the hunter submissive to them: "None is able to unbind the snares from your legs except those who tied them. I will send them a messenger so as to oblige them to satisfy you and remove the snares from your legs. Now depart and be satisfied! Now we are on the path accompanied by the Messenger."

In conclusion it can be said that the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* consists of an introduction and four parts in which the author first defines worldly, hypocritical love or friendship and the friendship of the brothers of truth

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[56] "Ḥamā'ilī looks back and sees the hunter who has not turned from behind them and goes on. She said as long as we are in the plain we go with hidden faces and he will not covet us. The solution of our problem is for us to leave the road and remain hidden in the valleys and the thickets as long as he covets us and keeps returning. When they had done this and become invisible, the hunter returned." Cf. Buxārī, *ibid.*, p. 154.

on two different levels. Then he gives a definition of each of the levels to be attained and transcended. He shows that in order to attain to the state of flying or the quality of an angel, which he equates with the state of prophecy or wisdom and the perfect man, the individual must break with his false friends who symbolize the world. These friends are partners with one's own inner hypocritical friends, because they seek worldly fame and give free rein to greed, passion and covetousness. They encourage concupiscence (*nafs al-ammāra*) in a person. For salvation from the carnal levels whose outward symbols are materialistic friends, one must join the brothers of truth. In their company one will attain levels, of understanding and true inner friendship which include clear-sightedness, freedom and salvation from desires, etc. In other words the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* is a description of solidarity, union and concord with these friends and the levels of existence one can reach in union and joint flight with them, which results in attaining the spirit.

This is the same message which is found in the tale of *Kalīla wa Dimna*. The subject of that story is the nature of friendship and how an assembly of friends comes into existence. It describes how they ultimately reach salvation from the hunter, or death, through solidarity and experience the state of freedom or becoming a spirit in flight, which is precisely the spiritual state.

CHAPTER VIII

The *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and the *Rasā'il ixwān aṣ-ṣafā.*

Baihaqī states in his *Tatimma ṣiwān al-ḥikma* that Ibn Sina's father studied and deliberated on the *Rasā'il ixwān aṣ-ṣafā*. This is not mentioned by other biographers such as al-Qifṭī, Šahrazūrī, or Ibn Abī Uṣaibi'a, who only refer to the fact that Ibn Sina's father claimed to be an Isma'īlī. Despite the scanty references on the subject it is certain that Ibn Sina was not only acquainted with the *Rasā'il ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* but that he had studied them thoroughly and had been influenced by them. His *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* amply demonstrates this. A comparison of the two works shows that there can be no doubt that five treatises of the *Rasā'il ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* were among his sources of inspiration in writing the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. These are the second treatise of the section on mathematics on the subject of geometry, the twenty-second treatise on the manner of the creation of the animals and their kinds, the forty-fourth treatise on the explanation of the beliefs of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā,* the forty-fifth treatise on the manner of association, solidarity and truthfulness of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* and the forty-eighth treatise on the manner of the summons to God. The influence of these treatises is most obvious in the section of the testament in the *Risalāt uṭ-ṭair*. Therefore in the present comparison of the contents of the *Risalāt uṭ-ṭair* and the *Rasā'il ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* treatises number forty-four and forty-five will be discussed in detail, while instances of influence from the other four treatises will be referred to in a more summary manner.

A. A Short history

Before proceeding to a comparison between the treatises it is necessary to give a short history of the *Rasā'il ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* and their precedence in time in relation to Ibn Sina.

The *Rasā'il ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* is a collection of fifty-three treatises of which fifty-two appear to be original.[1] These treatises have been gathered in four books each devoted to a particular field of study.

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[1] Al-Qifṭī believes that the original treatises are fifty-one. Cf. Al-Qifṭī, *Axbār al-ḥukamā*, p. 58.

1. Treatises on the mathematical sciences of which there are fourteen

2. Treatises on the natural sciences of which there are seventeen

3. Treatises on the psychological and rational sciences of which there are ten.

4. Treatises on the theological sciences of which there are eleven

At the beginning of the collection a treatise has been embedded which is a kind of introduction to the four books and gives a summary of all the treatises.[2]

The identity of the authors of the treatises remains a mystery even today. Al-Qifṭī, in the *Axbār al-ḥukamā,* recounts that some people attribute them to the descendants of 'Alī but disagree as to which imam could have been the author. There are also some who relate them to the Mu'tazilites, but al-Qifṭī himself, based on information given to him by Abū Ḥayyān at-Tauḥīdī (died after 400 A. H.), attributes them to five scholars who are purported to have lived together with the aim of realizing peace, purity and righteousness in their lives. Their aim was to integrate Greek philosophy with the Arab *šarī'a* and thus in their own minds purify the *šarī'a* from elements they held to be ignorance and error. The names given by al-Qifṭī as the authors of the *Rasā'il ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* are as follows: Abū Sulaimān Muḥammad ibn Ma'šar al-Bustī known as al-Muqaddasī, Abu'l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Hārūn az-Zanjānī, Abū Aḥmad an-Nahrajūrī, Abu'l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Rāmīnās al-'Aufī and Zaid ibn Rifā'a.[3] It is interesting to note that the majority of scholars follow the tradition of al-Qifṭī rather than that of Šahrazūrī, who also gives the names of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* in his *Nuzhat al-arwāḥ* but who differs from al-Qifṭī on some points.[4]

Marquet also reports that some scholars attribute the *Rasā'il* to 'Alī, the first imam of the šī'ītes, or to Imam Ja'far Ṣādiq, and points out that the Isma'īlīs themselves believed that their own propagandists (*du'āt*) had written the *Rasā'il* and identified 'Abdullāh ibn Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ as the original author.[5] Marquet also reports the five names given by at-Tauḥīdī. Concerning the authors of the *Rasā'il,* 'Umar Farrūx believes that the vizier Ibn Sa'dān recalled a few names by chance and wrote them down but that in reality numerous persons, many of whom were probably not members of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā,* contributed to this great encyclopedia and that in all probability the

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[2] This *risāla* is called "*Fihrist ar-rasā'il.*" Cf. *Rasā'il ixwān aṣ-ṣafā*, vol. I, p. 21.

[3] Cf. Farrūx, *Ikhwān uṣ-ṣafā*, p. 13.

[4] Cf. Šahrazūrī, *Nuzhat al-arwāḥ*, p. 508.

[5] Cf. Marquet, "Ikhwān Al-Ṣafā," *EI2*, vol. III, p. 1071.

Rasā'il ixwān aṣ-ṣafā were assembled over a relatively long period of time.[6]

To judge from the style of composition and the contents of the *Rasā'il,* it appears that one person with knowledge of all the subjects contained in the four volumes collected them and organized them into a single work, because there are cross-references between the treatises. Thus, for example, in the forty-fifth treatise it is stated that one can read in the second treatise that the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* took their sciences from four books. In the second treatise, on geometry the authors refer to subjects discussed in other treatises, thus demonstrating that the final editor of the second treatise is fully aware of the contents of the first treatise just as the author of a book knows what has been treated earlier in the same book. Or in the sixth treatise on the quiddity of nature the compiler repeatedly refers to subjects which occur in the treatise on the heavens and the one on the composition of the body. The author of the treatises is always aware of the subjects which precede and follow. For this reason as well as the homogenous and uniform style of composition of the prose of the *Rasā'il* it is possible to accept the report by Šahrazūrī in *Nuzhat al-arwāḥ*, corroborated by al-Qifṭī and al-Baihaqī, that the *Rasā'il* were edited by a single person, possibly al-Muqaddasī.

The date when the treatises were composed is also a subject characterized by more doubt than certainty. Indirect evidence such as the fact that al-Majriṭī, who died sometime between 350 and 375 A. H., was the first person to introduce the *Rasā'il ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* into Spain or the quotation of a verse by al-Mutanabbī (d. 354 A. H.) tradited by Hājjī Xalīfa or the mention of Abū Ma'šar al-Falakī (died 272 A. H. at the age of a hundred years) and much other historical evidence of the existence of the *Rasā'il* before Ibn Sina is reported by Marquet. He comes to the conclusion that the composition and assembling of the treatises took place between the years 297 and 354 A. H. and that the work was probably completed between 35 and 37 years before the conquest of Egypt by the Fatimids (358 A. H.) when it received its present form.[7]

'Umar Farrūx refers to the words of al-Qifṭī in the *Axbār al-ḥukamā* regarding the time of composition of the treatises and stresses the fact that the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* were already widely acclaimed and that their *Rasā'il* were widely spread before the year 373/983.[8] The date refers to the reported occasion when Ibn Sa'dān, vizier to Ṣamṣām ad-daula,

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[6] Cf. Farrūx, *Ikhwān,* p. 29.

[7] Cf. Marquet, *ibid.*, p. 1072 f.

[8] Cf. Farrūx, *ibid.* p. 29; Farrūx, "Ikhwān al-Ṣafā," *A History of Muslim Philosophy,* p. 289.

asked Abū Ḥayyān at-Tauḥīdī about the identity of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* in the belief that some of them were his friends.[9] The historical context in which their work was developed coincides with a period in which the 'Abbāsid caliphate was going through a crisis that would result in the restructuring of power in the Islamic world, while at the same time Islam had become firmly established as a political, religious and philosophical movement in all parts of the area under 'Abbāsid rule. At this period the Aš'arites were growing stronger, and their leader, Abu'l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Ismā'īl Aš'arī, who first belonged to the Mu'tazilites, enjoyed importance and the attention of the public (he died in 356 A.H. at the age of 96.). During the reign of the 'Abbasid al-Mustakfī (333-334) Baġdād was captured by Mu'izz ud-daula Aḥmad Būya, the Dailamite (332-356), and serious damage was inflicted on the profile of 'Abbasid government. It was at some point in the midst of all these events that Abū Ḥayyān at-Tauḥīdī recalls answering the questions of the vizier Ibn Sa'dān in his book *al-Imtā' wa'l-mu'ānisa*.

It is also about this time that Fatimid rule was established in Egypt (354 A. H.), and in the East the Samanids were at the height of their power. The Ismā'īlīs were close to the Samanid court and exerted so much influence over Amir Naṣr ibn Aḥmad and his vizier Bal'amī that they converted them to their rule of life. At the same time the movement of writing Persian and translating Middle Persian and Arabic works into Persian Dari received special attention from the Samanid amirs and works like the *Šāh-nāma* were being composed.

It is during this period that philosophers came to be accused of contradicting religion and aroused mobs set fire to many of their homes. In this period of political unrest a group of Muslim philosophers, the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā,* proceeded to reinvigorate philosophy with an ideology proclaiming love of all the sciences. The anarchy of the period made it possible for publicly expressed ideas to be used as instruments in the hands of religious fanatics or politically powerful men, and therefore this group of philosophers condemned all kinds of religious fanaticism and considered the spilling of blood of an innocent person because of differences of religion meaningless. They say:

> "Among the people there are individuals who have love and compassion for all people in their faith and religion. They seek forgiveness for sinners, they show kindness for all living beings among animals and they desire betterment in

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[9] Cf. Corbin, *Histoire de la philosophie islamique*, Pers. trans. Mubašširī, vol. I, p. 289.

everything. This is the religion of the doers of good and those who are virtuous and righteous among the believers. This is the religion of our respected brothers."[10]

Regarding the original home of the society of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* we have no exact information. However it is the near-unanimous belief held by a majority of scholars, including Corbin, Dānišpažūh, 'Umar Farrūx, that they lived in Baṣra. Although until now no city has been connected with them even indirectly as the scene of their gatherings. This is the city in which Ibn al-Muqaffa' studied and worked at his translations.

With regard to the naming of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* there are various traditions. I. R. Netton in his book *Muslim Neoplatonists* first gives an account of Goldziher's theory that the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafa* chose their name from the story of the ring-dove in *Kalīla wa Dimna* and then reports the opinion of Ṭibāwī who derives the name of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* from the root *ṣafā* (purity) and *ṣafwat* (choicest) and believes that in choosing this name they were trying to imitate the Ṣūfīs in some way. In the end Netton considers that Ṭibāwī comes closer to the truth than Goldziher. He explains that he would be able to accept Goldziher's theory if they themselves had not sometimes added other epithets to their name. However, because they referred to themselves as the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā wa xullān al-wafā* 'the brothers of purity and friends of loyalty' and other such epithets which defined their brotherhood, he finds reason to doubt a relationship between their name and the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* of *Kalīla wa Dimna*.[11] On the other hand 'Umar Farrūx has no doubt that the name was inspired by the story of the ring-dove, mouse, tortoise, crow and gazelle because, in the translation of Ibn al-Muqaffa', the animals agree to lead a life of solidarity, band together and serve each other.[12] It should be observed that the animals in question in the story of *Kalīla wa Dimna* call themselves brothers (*ixwān*) regardless of gender. Thus the dove is female and the mouse is even called her sister in some of the Persian translations.[13] This point could also have been noticed by the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā*, because they had a spiritual brotherhood which was a kind of divine solidarity, in which 'brotherhood' was interpreted apart from the question of gender, because in the world of spiritual beings gender has no meaning.

The question should be asked whether the designation *'Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā'* was created by Ibn al-Muqaffa' or if it existed in Arabic literature before him. In answer it should be emphasized that the name *'Ixwān*

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[10] Cf. *Rasā'il ixwān aṣ-ṣafā*, vol. IV, p. 44.

[11] Cf. Netton, *Muslim Neoplatonists*, p. 4 ff.

[12] Cf. Farrūx, *Ikhwān*, p. 15.

[13] Cf. Buxārī, *Dāstānhāy-i Bīdpāy*, p. 155.

aṣ-ṣafā belonged to the repertory of expressions which existed before Islam and that it occurs for the first time in Arabic in the poetry Aws ibn Hazar Isma'īl ibn Yasār and Abi'l-Hanak al-Bira ibn Rab'ī Fuq'ī as tradited by Abū Tamām the *Šī'ī* (died 231 A. H.).[14] Concerning its presence in the *Qur'ān,* these words occur once in relation with the trajectory between Ṣafā and Marwa, the two hills between which the pilgrims must run seven times as part of the ritual of the pilgrimage (*Qur.* 2: 158).

So far no one has been able has been able to give a conclusive and clear description of the religion of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā*. In the opinion of Ḏ. Ṣafā the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* were a group who adhered to the ideas of Plato and Pythagoras. He holds that they were only acquainted with Aristotle through the *Kitāb-al-tufāḥa* (The Book of Apple) and *Theology* which were incorrectly attributed to him. He rejects the suggestion of any kind of relations between this group and a religious sect. He believes that they spread their treatises anonymously in order to avoid opposition from the representatives of religion and philosophy.[15] 'Umar Farrūx shares this idea and considers that they belonged to the religion of philosophy and that they were completely without any kind of religious affiliation. He specifically denies any relation between them and imāmī Šī'ism.[16]

Henri Corbin is of the opinion that the treatises were written by individuals with clearly Ismā'īlī ideas.[17] This opinion is shared by Marquet as well as Ivanov[18] in his complete assurance that the writers of the *Rasā'il* were Isma'īlīs.[19] S. M. Stern is among the few who have some reservations in relating the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* directly to Ismā'īlism, he writes:

> "It is obvious that the authors of the Epistles, though they were connected with Ismailism, elaborated a peculiar doctrine which was not at all acceptable to the main body of the movement. Thus, while in the fifth/eleventh century the teaching of the Epistles exercised a considerable influence on philosophic and scientific circles unconnected with Ismailism, there is no trace of the influence of the Epistles among the Ismaili authors of the period."[20]

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[14] Cf. *Mujmal ul-ḥikma*, ed. Dānišpažūh and Afšār, p. II f.

[15] Cf. Ṣafā,*Tārīx-i adabīyyāt dar Irān*, vol. I, p. 320.

[16] Cf. Farrux, *Ikhwān,* p. 17.

[17] Cf. Corbin, *Histoire*, p. 183.

[18] Cf. Ivanov, *A Guide to Ismaili Literature*, (London), p. 31.

[19] Marquet, "Ikhwān Al-Ṣafā,"*EI2*, vol. III, p. 1073

[20] Stern, 'New Information about the Authors of the "Epistles of the Sincere Brethren"', *Islamic Studies*, vol. III, no. 4 (1964), p. 417.

Netton in his book *Muslim Neoplatonists* writes:

> "In view of the essential nature of the Imamate to the Ismailis, and the inferior role allocated to the imamate by the Ikhwān, it may be concluded that the Ikhwān were not Ismailis. The *Rasā'il* should not therefore be described, in the words of one scholar, as the oldest account of Ismaili doctrine. The Ismaili elements found in the *Rasā'il* are reducible to the level of influences and should not be regarded as indigenous factors in the doctrine of the Ikhwān." [21]

Sayyed Hossein Nasr also rejects any direct relations of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* with the Ismā'īlīs and with political propaganda and considers their aim in writing the *Rasā'il* educational.[22]

In fact there is only one source upon which researchers on this subject can rely and that is the treatises of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* themselves. Despite previous investigation of these works it has still been impossible to determine in a satisfactory manner the exact nature of the beliefs and religion of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā*. As a result not only have the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* succeeded in keeping their identity completely hidden but also their faith. In their works they have left so little trace of themselves that their supporters and opponents are unable to classify them in any category. They, however, consider themselves to be Muslims and address their followers as Šī'a, a conclusion which can be drawn from treatise forty-eight in which the sayings of one of the Šī'ī imams appear to have been tradited. In them he refers to individuals who outwardly claim to be their followers but in reality feel fanaticism, hostility and spite towards them. Then the author refers to another group who are said to be clothed in Šī'ism but act in opposition, and he says that such people do not belong to the *Ixwān,* because they have used Šī'ism as an opportunity to do business. Then the author of the treaty maintains that he himself does not belong to those opportunists and even taunts persons who lament the absence of the body of the imams.[23]

On the other hand, however, least the author of treatise forty-eight speaks in the language of the Šī'ī imams and in this language confesses to be a Šī'ī Muslim in search of the science and knowledge of the *Qur'ān* and expresses a desire to study *fiqh* in depth. He maintains that the saints (*anbiyā'*) are the treasuries of divine knowledge and the imams are the inheritors of the knowledge of prophethood.

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[21] Netton, *Muslim*, p. 103 f.

[22] Cf. Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines,* p. 30.

[23] Cf. *Rasā'il,* vol. IV, p. 147.

B. Ibn Sina's circle of students and the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā*

In the forty-eighth treatise of the *Rasā'il* the society of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* is clearly referred to and from the treatise it appears that this society had a secret organization in all the main cities of the Islamic world, that it arranged regular well-organized meetings at predetermined times which were not open to strangers. According to the treatise they held lectures on all the branches of knowledge and discussed intellectual, scientific and metaphysical subjects at these meetings.

The *Risāla-yi sarguḏašt* of Ibn Sina, which was written down by Jūzjānī, describes how he first organized an assembly of students in Gurgān. It is there that Jūzjānī joined him as a student and remained with him until the end of his life. On this subject Jūzjānī writes: "I used to attend him (Ibn Sina) every day and study the *Almagest* and ask for dictation in logic, so he dictated The *Middle Summary on Logic* to me.".[24]

In regard to Ibn Sina's circle of students in Hamadān, Jūzjānī writes that during the days the Šaix, as Ibn Sina was popularly called, fulfilled his duties as vizier of Šams ad-daula and at night he gathered his students around him: "And every night pupils would gather at his house, while by turns I would read from the *Šifā* and someone else would read from the *Qānūn*."[25]

A third stage in creating an assembly of students is associated with Iṣfahān, where Ibn Sina lived at the court of 'Alā' ud-daula. Jūzjānī recalls the regular meetings and from his description it is obvious that Ibn Sina held two kinds of meetings. One kind was organized by 'Alā ud-daula for the purpose of debate with the students which Jūzjānī describes as follows: "One day the Master was sitting in presence of the Amir, while Abū Manṣūr al-Jabbān was present."[26] Then he recounts that sometimes the discussion would lead to argument about the meaning of words, and on one occasion Abū Manṣūr said to the Šaix that he was a philosopher and a sage but that he didn't know anything about philology. Jalāl Humā'ī also notes that Ibn Sina was always present at 'Alā ud-daula's meetings for debates and reports:

> "One of the works of 'Alā' ud-daula after the Šaix had settled in Iṣfahān was that he organized scientific and cultural (*adabī*) meetings for debate and disputation. These meetings took place every week on Friday evening in the presence of 'Alā' ud-daula

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[24] Gohlman, *The Life of Ibn Sina*, p. 45.

[25] Gohlman, *ibid.*, p. 55.

[26] Gohlman, *ibid.*, p. 69.

himself and a group of the great learned men. Scientific and cultural subjects were discussed in the manner that was customary in older times."[27]

In relation to the meetings of the Šaix it is recounted that he had written a small book on the subject of logic which was later added to the *Kitāb an-najāt*. This book had come into the hands of the learned legal specialists of Šīrāz, who questioned one of the points in it and desired an explanation from the author. Through the judge (*qāźī*) of Šīrāz they sent a representative with their question to Ibn Sina and requested an answer. Jūzjānī describes the circumstances in which Ibn Sina answered the letter by explaining that a group of students were having a discussion in his presence and they went on debating after Ibn Sina received the message from Šīrāz. In the meantime Ibn Sina asked for some paper and sat until dawn writing the answer.[28] This point is corroborated by Jalāl Humā'ī in his article. In other words, in Iṣfahān he always had his circle of students around him and they were engaged in the discussion of scientific subjects day and night.

There is much discussion about the ideals and religion of the students of Ibn Sina. During his lifetime he had many famous students in philosophy, mathematics and other sciences, who reached high positions and wrote many works. Among them one finds Jūzjānī, whose specialty was mathematics, Abu'l-Ḥasan Bahmanyār, who was a Zoroastrian from Āḏarbāijān and who wrote the *Kitāb al-mabāḥiṯ dar jawāb-i su'ālāt*, and Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Ma'ṣūmī, to whom Ibn Sina dedicated his *Risālat fī'l-'išq*. Ma'ṣūmī was killed while still a youth in the massacre of the Mu'tazilites in Ray organized by Maḥmūd of Ġazna.

This group surrounding Ibn Sina provides an illustration of Ibn Sina's ideal of who should belong to the circle of friends. He held that the brothers of truth formed a group whose motives surmounted social, material, religious or other considerations. To him the world of spirituality transcended religions and religious fanaticism, and access to his group was based on the idea that as long as a person was seeking to understand that world he was welcome into the circle.

In Ibn al-Muqaffa"s description of the life of Burzūya the physician, he gives a definition of this spiritual truth which is beyond religious fanaticism in these words:

"Some have inherited [their religion] from their fathers and have grasped the branch of imitation [of their forefathers] and some have construed a religion of

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[27] Humā'ī, *"Rābiṭa-yi Ibn Sīnā bā Iṣfahān," Jašn-nāmay-i Ibn Sīnā*, vol. II, p. 246.

[28] Cf. Gohlam, *The Life*, p. 79 ff.

predestination and coercion and fear and pleasure and have directed their lives toward this. Still others have recognized the trap of worldly goods and desire and directed their lives towards the search for status and rank. Everyone I saw and questioned gave me the following answer: 'I adhere to the truth and my opponents have remained with their foot in the trap of ignorance and error.'"[29]

Also the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā,* in their instructions to their adherents and beginners on the way, explain their policy in regard to religions and religious fanaticism in a manner which is reminiscent of the words of Burzūya.[30]

Another point which the meetings of Ibn Sina and the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* have in common is the traditional ritual aspect of the sessions. Our information about the customary rituals of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* is based entirely on their own writings while knowledge of the meetings of Ibn Sina is based on the *Risāla-yi sarguḏašt* of Jūzjānī. Jūzjānī writes that when Ibn Sina had established his circle of students in Hamadān, they would discuss and read the *Qānūn* and the *Šifā* and, when the night became heavy, minstrels and musicians would come along and remove the weariness from the face of the night. It is also reported that they drank wine.[31]

Within the context of discussions by legal specialists music and wine-drinking were seen as an aspect of unreflected behavior and a source of debauchery and frivolity, but it seems that in the philosophical way of life advocated by Ibn Sina music played the same role in the mysticism of the philosophers as the Ṣūfī *samā'*. Both music and wine were considered to drive tiredness from the brain and make it more susceptible to receive insight into intellectual and spiritual matters. In this respect Ibn Sina followed the teachings of the Pythagorians. Wine is mentioned three times in the *Sarguḏašt* of Ibn Sina. The first is in the time of his early youth; there Ibn Sina tells in his own words how he did not waste one minute of the day or night when he was engaged in studies of the branches of philosophy. He would spend the nights beside the lamp contemplating his books and when sleep overcame him he would drink a cup of wine and then return to his studies.[32]

The second mention of wine-drinking refers to the meetings of Ibn Sina's students in Hamadān, who would drink wine after the singing and playing of the minstrels.[33] The third instance was the time in

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[29] Buxārī, *Dāstānhā,* p. 61.

[30] Cf. *Rasā'il*, vol. IV, p. 41 f.

[31] Cf. Gohlman,*The Life*, p. 55.

[32] Cf. Gohlman, *ibid.*, p. 31

[33] Cf. Gohlman, *The Life*, p. 55

Iṣfahān when the students had gathered in his presence and he was answering their questions, at the same time as he was writing the answer to the question of the qāźī of Šīrāz.[34] On this occasion it is reported that the Šaix then dismissed his students and sat writing until morning. At sunrise when morning prayer was called, he put the papers with the answer on Jūzjānī's prayer carpet and asked him to deliver it to Kirmānī, the representative of the *qāźī*.[35] On the subject of the importance of music the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* have this to say:

> "Rightly the sages constructed many different musical instruments like the drum and the tambourine for musical tunes and songs, but the most perfect musical instrument which they built was the lute and that was in order to keep the spirits of the seekers of philosophical knowledge and the observers of mortification alert and awake."[36]

In the Persian translation of the *Mujmal ul-ḥikma* it is said, "The principle of the science of music is counting, and just as there is no limit to numbers in the same way there is no limit to the song or to the melody."[37] "And regarding music it is a principle that if it is played at dawn it will influence (the morning worship), so that every prayer accompanied by a musical instrument will be granted more quickly. In the same way great men in society ordered the playing of the flute and the harp at dawn."[38] Finally the *Ixwān* attribute the power of curing body and soul to music and maintain that if music is played in the *miḥrāb* the prayer will be answered or in the hospital the sick will be cured. But the most interesting aspect of playing music is that it increases the receptivity of the spirit. In the treatise on music they clearly refer to the songs that cause ecstasy and union with the spiritual world and not the music which is forbidden by law as being conducive to debauchery and frivolity and which heightens states of passion.[39]

As was stated above the students of Ibn Sina were knowledgeable about music, but it is not reported that Ibn Sina himself knew music in the same way as Fārābī, although he wrote a treatise on Music. In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair,* however, Ibn Sina considers music to be the language of the angels:

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[34] Cf. Gohlman, *ibid.*, p. 79.

[35] Cf. Gohlman, *ibid.,* p. 79.

[36] *Rasā'il*, vol. I, p. 202.

[37] *Mujmal ul-ḥikma*, ed. Dānišpažūh and Afšār, p. 83.

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 88.

[39] Cf. *Rasā'il*, vol. I, p. 234.

"We landed on the eighth mountain whose summit was so high that it reached the highest heaven. Around its flanks lived such birds, that I had never experienced sweeter melodies, more splendid colors, more graceful figures or more delightful companions than theirs. When we took residence in their vicinity we enjoyed so much of their beneficence, affection, intimacy and assistance that we could not pay back the least of it"

Thus the *Ixwān* used music as a means of elevating the spirit as well as wine drunk in moderate quantities as is maintained by 'Umar Farrūx.[40] Music and wine were thought to induce peace and tranquility, which led to the refining of the susceptibilities of the soul. The *Ixwān* induce that their followers to take part in listening to songs and moderate drinking of wine at their private assemblies.

At the end of this section it can be concluded that Ibn Sina was always surrounded by a circle of students during his long years of teaching and that they met at regular times. It is natural therefore that he felt obliged to establish a set of rules for such a circle, especially as this is reported to have been at the request of the students themselves. This would give them a clear plan of procedure for their life together. The *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* had unfolded just such a plan for their adepts in the forty-fifth treatise.

C. The *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and the forty-fifth treatise of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā*

In the assembly of friends who are joined together in a spiritual fellowship the principle of solidarity and unanimity should be observed, so that the members can reveal the secrets of their hearts to one another within the safety of the circle. In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* Ibn Sina speaks of how the members of the circle of friends should find one another and help one another to reach the station of the angels. The *Ixwān*, who provided an older model for the treatise of Ibn Sina, speak of the clear and accepted rules of the spiritual brotherhood and describe how they should help one another in union on the way of perfection. They explain that each one should strive as much for the benefit of the others as for himself and that ultimately the whole group should come to act as one body. Below we will compare the two

[40] Cf. Farrūx, *Ikhwān*, p. 25.

treatises and show how the treatise on the manner of association and solidarity of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* influenced the *Risalat ut-tair* of Ibn Sina, which treats of the manner of association, unanimity and solidarity of the brothers of truth. Before we begin we would like to make two preliminary remarks concerning differences between them.

First, Ibn Sina in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* differs from the forty-fifth treatise in that he has developed the concept of solidarity to represent two levels, first the solidarity of the inner faculties of the individual and secondly the solidarity of the brothers who exist in the world outside. When Ibn Sina envisages a friend, his first thought is of the true interior friends, such as the faculties of the intelligence, and secondly he refers to individuals who, like himself, have reached a certain station and who guide an assembly of spirits on the way to attaining the perfection of the higher states.

Secondly, the forty-fifth treatise presents in direct style the set of rules adopted by the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* to guide the spiritual life of their assembly and does not appear to use symbolic language or allegory to illustrate these principles. Each treatise expresses in its own way a set of rules for the association of a group of philosophers, whose religion is a love of all the branches of knowledge. Let us now make a comparison of the two treatises to establish the common points between them.

In the forty-fifth treatise it is stated that the brothers who are from different cities organize sessions which meet at specified times. They are not allowed to bring strangers to attend these meetings. The author reports that the meetings are devoted to discussions of the sciences and sharing and discussing the secrets of the heart.[41]

The introduction of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* begins with a description of what characterizes the brothers of truth and their assembly. Then a set of rules in the manner of a testament (*waṣīyya*) which is modeled on the spiritual life of Ibn Sina himself is presented: "O brothers of truth! Spread in the world and join together! Open your heart to one another, and let each unveil his heart before his brother, so that you may instruct and perfect each other!"

Thus both treatises state that the first reason for the brothers to assemble is to fulfill their pledge to help each other to reach perfection and to allow them to lift the veil concealing their secrets from one another.

In other words, becoming united in heart and color, becoming pure together, becoming transparent together, being without veil with one another, which means that opacity has been dispelled, are the characteristics of their union with purity. With this picture of the ideal brothers of truth Ibn Sina reveals his understanding of purity and

[41] Cf. *Rasā'il*, vol. IV, p. 41.

stresses that the only thing which prevents one from seeing the truth and troubles the imagination is opacity, color and the veil and that removing the veil leads to the truth and light. Becoming like a mirror means that the individual is able to see without hinder or veil. In his translation of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair,* Suhrawardī says about this matter: "no one's friend becomes pure as long as the friend keeps the mixture of opacity."[42]

Thus purity and opacity have been established as opposites, and the pure friend is a person who is as transparent as glass, is without color and does not conceal anything in his heart.

At this point the treatise of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* presents the branches of knowledge, that the students must study. Likewise we are informed in the *Sarguḏašt* of Ibn Sina that his students are engaged in the study of the same subjects. Among the subjects advocated in both circles we find mathematics, geometry, astronomy and metaphysics and music and even commentary (*tafsīr*).

The treatise of the *Ixwān* then states that the brothers should not feel hostility towards any branch of knowledge, nor should they hold any book to be obsolete, nor should they be fanatical towards any system of thought (*maḏhab*).[43] The *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* does not mention this matter, but we see that the life and circle of students of Ibn Sina actually illustrate these principles, because his students belonged to different religions and they were all accepted into the circle as long as they were engaged in seeking the truth and professed love of the sciences.

The continuation of the treatise of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* is interesting in that it could be taken as a commentary on the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair.* The treatise of the *Ixwān* states that in choosing a friend the individual must be cautious because, "it is correct that among people there are groups who have different natures which are outside of moderation and they have habits which are corrupt and their religions are contrary to the current religions of society."[44] And then they reflect on good and bad natures in a general way. Sahlān Sāwī, in his commentary on the *Risālat ut-tair,* says about different natures and peoples, "First one must recognize that the human population consists of peoples and each people is distinct from the other in character and ways of words and expressions."[45]

In the treatise of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* the *Ixwān* explain why characters differ in people:

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[42] Spies and Khatak, *Three Treatises on Mysticism*, p. 39.

[43] Cf. *Rasā'il,* vol. IV, p. 48.

[44] *Rasā'il, ibid.*, p, 43.

[45] Spies and Khatak, *Three Treatises,* p. 48.

"People are distinguished from each other by their characters and this (the difference in character) is connected with the manner of composition of the temperaments of their bodies (in the opinion of Hippocrates the mixture of different temperaments in the composition of the bodies produces different characters) and differences in the heavenly constellations in the principle of their birth. (That is, the manner of composition of the temperament and differences in the heavenly constellations at the time of birth are what determine the nature and character of an individual.)"[46]

Sahlān Sāwī treats this subject even more extensively and describes how different factors, such as the spheres and heavens which exercise their influence and water, air, plant and the soil of the earth which leave their impressions, all contribute to the formation of the nature of individuals. He goes on to discuss how these impressions are different in every place on earth and concludes that therefore the nature and temperament of men are also different.[47]

In discussing natures and habits, the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* point out that bad habits are the cause of bad character and good habits result in a good character. In the commentary (*tafsīr*) on the *Risāla uṭ-ṭair* Sahlān Sāwī writes:

"When the sages refer to the refinement of the character and it's transformation from bad to good, they do so in this way that at the moment of creation a person has no temperament or natural disposition and that he acquires a good temperament and excellent habits. The natural disposition of the good temperament can be acquired with mortification and the doing of good deeds." [48]

In continuation he says: "When there comes a transformation in the temperament, it follows that there will be a change in the character."[49]

In the forty-fifth treatise the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* describe how the individual should choose a friend or a brother who can make the process of gaining insight into the levels of spiritual development easier for him. The friend should have characteristics which make him worthy of one's friendship:

"The sincere brother must help at the time of removing enemies and provide the means of honoring his brother in the presence of his friends. The brothers must be like pillars who at times of calamity and difficulty are able to support each other. The sincere brother is he who commands you to do good deeds and pushes you in

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[46] Cf. *Rasā'il*, vol. IV, p. 44.

[47] Cf. Spies and Khatak, *Three Treatises,* p. 50.

[48] Spies and Khatak, *ibid.*, p. 50.

[49] Spies and Khatak, *ibid.* p. 50.

that direction and encourages you in good works and incites you, saying 'Go and do that' and guides you in that work."[50]

In his commentary on the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair,* Sahlān Sāwī says in the section on choosing a friend that God has created the human being in such a way that living alone is very difficult for him and that as a result he is obliged to find company: "Know that association with true friends is beautiful and useful and not every person has the perception of this pleasure nor the acquisition of this honor and level."[51]

At this point in the treatise of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* the authors address themselves directly to the reader, saying that he should be careful about his associates and those whom he frequents and in doing so should not attach importance to outward factors but that he should devote all his attention to interior matters:

"Know that there are individuals among men who present themselves as friends and trick you into thinking they are companions and manifest their love for you, but in their bosoms and interiors they are against it. Do not be proud of your friendship with them and do not put faith in them!"[52]

Then they give examples of worthless individuals who are not worthy of friendship. Among that group they enumerate persons who love to receive praise in matters in which they are not worthy. Others belittle people, are miserly in distributing wealth or can be jealous, cruel or quick to anger. This is expressed by the *Ixwān* as follows: "Or if he is fond of praise and eulogy of which he is not worthy or he believes in his own ability and strength or is satisfied with his own cruelty or he belittles people and his own companions. All of these are examples of a corrupt character."[53]

Further in the *Rasā'il* they say: "If an individual desires something which was not determined for him and does not grant generously that which has been provided for him he is jealous, obstinate and full of anger, and such a character keeps him back from acknowledging the truth."[54]

In his commentary on the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair,* Sahlān Sāwī divides human society into several groups and discusses which persons are worthy of friendship and which persons should be avoided. As an example he says:

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[50] *Rasā'il, ibid.*, p. 44

[51] Spies and Khatak, *Three Treatises*, p. 51.

[52] *Rasā'il,* vol. IV, p. 45 f.

[53] *Rasā'il, ibid.*, p. 47

[54] *Rasā'il, ibid.*, p. 47.

"But regarding these two categories avoid associating or meeting with them as much as you can, because it is they who love praise and eulogy more than they merit, and they are haughty with their peers and they have confidence in their own strength and wealth, and it is ruin and corruption to put your faith in persons who have this character."[55]

He says in continuation:

"Each one who approves the search for a thing which is not worthy of him, his soul will not object to being submitted to a thing which is necessary for him and he will not be empty of jealousy and obstinacy and all of these characters are hindrances in the submission to God (*ḥaqq*)."[56]

In their treatise the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* say: "Know that friendship between two persons who have different natures does not become perfect because two opposites cannot become united . . . for that reason the achievement of true friendship never comes."[57] And in his commentary on Ibn Sina's *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* Sahlān Sāwī says that true friends must be victorious over the two natures because if: "the masters of two natures[58] associate with each other as opponents between them quarrels and hostility will arise and friendship will not ensue."[59] He continues his commentary by giving a Persian translation of the examples which occur in the treatise of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā*.
In the treatise of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* this passage continues:

"Know that the example of finding a friend and choosing a brother is like acquiring wealth and fortune. Some people spend their whole lives in the process of acquiring prosperous and congenial friends and they do not make public this friend. After finding a friend keeping and observing one's side of the friendship and applying the faith and rights which exist in friendship (is important), because if it becomes otherwise the friendship will turn into enmity after a while."[60]

And Sahlān Sāwī says on this subject: "Then it is necessary that when you acquire a friend who has succeeded in forming his own good character keep him, because acquiring such a treasure is not as great as

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[55] Spies and Khatak, *Three Treatises*, p. 53.
[56] Spies and Khatak, *ibid.*, p. 53.
[57] *Rasā'il*, vol. IV, p. 46.
[58] The animal soul and the vegetative soul.
[59] Spies and Khatak, *Three Treatises*, p. 53.
[60] *Rasā'il*, vol. IV, p. 47.

keeping him, the acquiring of his friendship is not as useful as keeping him in a state of friendship."[61]

It can be noted here that in the forty-fifth treatise the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* define the characteristics and ideology of their own group with the purpose of preparing members for participation in their own assembly. Thus when they have been brought together in the association, they follow the path of perfection and spirituality and ultimately reach the level of brotherhood, in which their own souls become a divine book and a model of living for other brothers wishing to follow the same path. For the brothers who persevere it is thought that when they have reached the age of fifty years they will be able to ascend and attain the highest level of insight into the world of spirituality.[62]

Sahlān, Sāwī in his commentary on the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* of Ibn Sina, considers the ideal of the brothers of truth of Ibn Sina and the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* as identical. For this reason when he defines the brothers of truth of Ibn Sina, he quotes exactly the same words with which the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* describe a friend and companion with no further commentary. The *Ixwān* say: "The friendship of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* is a kinship based on friendship and love, and they exercise love for one another during their lives and they become heirs to one another. They adhere to one another in a manner that they believe and see that they have one soul in different bodies. Then their bodies are transformed on the basis of their nature, but the soul does not change and does not accept change."[63] In fact this description by the *Ixwān* of how they envisaged their ideal of the relationship of the brothers remained valid for many generations to come despite changes in time, place and opinion.

One can conclude therefore that when Ibn Sina defines the brothers of truth, he has in mind the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā*'s definition of truth and purity. It is certain that he had seen their treatise and compared their discussion on truth with his own ideas. It is for this reason that Sahlān Sāwī in his explanation of what Ibn Sina meant by the brothers of truth quoted the long definition by the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā*. [64] Therefore, when Sahlān Sāwī comments on the introduction of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair,* which is about the separation of false friends from true friends, by giving the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā*'s definition of false friends and true friends he is in fact saying that Ibn Sina held exactly the same opinion as they did on this question.

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[61] Spies and Khatak, *Three Treatises*, p. 53

[62] *Rasā'il,* vol. IV, p. 57 f.

[63] *Rasā'il, ibid.*, p. 48.

[64] Spies and Khatak, *Three treatises*, p. 54.

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* Ibn Sina gives the following description of the brothers of truth:

> "except for the brothers of Truth, who are assembled by divine kinship and brought together by celestial closeness. They have observed the Truth with inner sight and cleansed their innermost secret from all stain of doubt. A society such as theirs will not be united except by the herald of a divine summons,"

The *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* describe their own brothers of truth as follows:

> "Know that the hearts of the charitable brothers are pure and clean, because their spirits are pure and unsullied. The secrets of their works are not hidden. They regard the exterior of all things with the inner eye. Then do not hide from your chosen brothers the opposite of that which you have revealed to them. This means do not hide a thing from them. Try demonstrating for them, so that they see everything with the inner eye! Then nothing will be hidden from them and you will not be anxious in regard to them."[65]

In the introduction of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* the characteristics of the brothers of truth are enumerated, because the author of the treatise, who describes himself as a stranger in pain, is seeking exactly this kind of brother with which to share his pain. The pain of the author of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* is caused by longing for acquisition of the station of the spirit and ascension to the final level of perfection and union with the sole Truth. It is not possible to travel this way alone, and therefore it is necessary to have companions and friends. In the second part of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*, the testament (*waṣīyya*), Ibn Sina gives advice to the companion who has pledged to join him about how he can prepare for the journey, a journey from the animal world to the world of the angels.

In the forty-fifth treatise also, after the description of brotherhood and the explanation of how to find a true brother, the reason for finding a brother is explained as being the perception of the spiritual worlds. Then the treatise goes on to talk about the testament (*waṣīyya*) and how to prepare the brother to choose a master for himself. He is told how not to be deceived by a pious appearance and a show of learning, and ultimately the individual will find that: "the intelligent teacher who has a perfect nature enjoys a good character. He has a transparent mind, he cherishes science, he is a searcher of the truth and he is not fanatic in religious matters."[66] It is even suggested that a young and knowledgeable teacher is of more help than an old but

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[65] *Rasā'il*, vol. IV, p. 49.

[66] *Rasā'il*, *ibid.*, p. 51.

fanatical and stupid teacher. After that the experienced brothers instruct the new brother about the levels to be attained and explain that at the fourth level, which can be attained only after the age of fifty, spiritual worlds will be opened to him on a broader scale:

> "This is a testimony of the circumstances of the truth, and it is of the faculties of the level of the angels which, after the age of fifty years, (a brother) enters into, and that is the time when the soul is prepared for the return and separation from the material world. Then the power of the ascension (*mi'rāj*) comes down to them and by means of it they ascend to the kingdom of heaven."[67]

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair,* after distinguishing between the different kinds of friendship, the author gives advice and counsel (*waṣīyya*) to the brothers of truth. The next phase of the treatise is expressed in the form of a story, *ḥadīṯ*, based on the tale of the ring-dove, in which Ibn Sina illustrates the definition of solidarity and brotherhood and the way of spirituality and its goal, the ascension (*mi'rāj*) of the soul.

In conclusion the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* explain in the forty-fifth treatise that the end of the way is the level attained by the brothers after the age of fifty years and that this is the equivalent of the *mi'rāj*.

D. The similarity of the discourse of Ibn Sina and the second treatise of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā*, the treatise on geometry

In the second treatise the *Ixwān* emphasize the fact that one human being is not able to cope with all aspects of life alone and that a human life is a very short time to learn all the sciences and crafts. Therefore the individual is compelled to live within a society to which he contributes his share and depends on others to guarantee certain of his needs in a way in which everyone enjoys the fruits of solidarity. The authors apply this to the spiritual world and to the spiritual advancement of the human being in a circle of morally responsible individuals. They maintain that when an individual has fallen into this world of perversion through the sin of his father, Adam, he needs brotherly help to be delivered from it and elevated to the world of the spheres or seven heavens and the highest dwelling in proximity with the angels. The brothers are his counselors and friends who are acquainted with religious matters and learned men who are familiar with the realities of the next world. They know how to help an individual by guiding him away from the abyss of

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[67] *Rasā'il, ibid.*, p. 57.

calamity in the material world and leading him to the higher world. In order to illustrate these matters they refer to the story of the ring-dove: "Pay attention to the story of the ring-dove which is found in the book of *Kalīla and Dimna* and how the birds escaped from the snare, because it is by means of it that we confirm the truth of our words."[68]

In order to explain this likeness they say that when the sages tell an allegory about worldly matters (as is the case with the story of the ring-dove) their aim is always to discuss matters of the next world. By making allegories and telling stories they are adapting the level of their message to the intellectual level of people at a particular time and place. Thus they hold discussions in a form suited to the understanding of their audience.

In the discussion above some important points have been raised. One is that following the way of perfection and the way of spiritual beings on one's own does not lead to an ability to see the light. The traveler on this way needs solidarity and partnership as well as the brotherhood of like-minded and pure friends, because one person cannot know all things and life is too short to make it possible to acquire an understanding of everything. It is precisely to illustrate this thesis that the *Ixwān* evoke the example of human society in which a man alone cannot succeed in fulfilling all his needs but is compelled to participate in a circle of giving and taking, in which the members support one another in proportion to their abilities. It is therefore that the *Ixwān* maintain that in order to attain the level of perfection there must be a group in which the members assist one another in perfecting one another, as they advance to a succession of different spiritual stations.

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* Ibn Sina first refers to the assembly of the brothers and develops the theme that they must become united at heart and help each other in self-perfection. He says that individuals must use their inner strength to become one themselves and one by one must bring their faculties from potentiality to realization. Then he explains that the expression 'becoming a bird' means that one must leave the bestial world and go in the direction of the world of the angels. This involves abandoning the snares of the world of perversion. He shows by means of the story which he has included in the treatise that without the help of the brothers of truth the imprisoned bird would never have found the way to liberation from the cage and the world of perversion. It is in catching sight of them that he discovers his own imprisonment. He learns the way of liberation from them and with them he keeps himself safe from the danger of the hunter. The birds guide one another on the way and thus avoid danger. Ultimately they reach each

[68] *Rasā'il*, vol. I, p. 100.

of the levels they are seeking for, that is, they leave the proximity of Satan or they release themselves from the snare. The bird flies to the world of heaven, traverses its expanse and reaches the highest heaven. He even comes near the angels and at the last stage succeeds in meeting the great king. The *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* say that the ring-dove is the material symbol of the story and emphasize that the allegory corresponds to the measure of understanding of the listeners. Their aim in recounting the story of the dove is to illustrate a spiritual theme, but they never openly state it. Ibn Sina uses the story for the same reason. However, he specifically informs his listeners of his spiritual interpretation as a flight of the spirit to the world of the angels, while the *Ixwān* only refer to it in the form of the story of the ring-dove. Ibn Sina formulates their spiritual intention and illustrates it with the story of the journey of the birds and calls the bird (which is the symbol of the particular soul which has been made aware) "I". By this means he explicitly states and openly demonstrates the underlying spiritual meaning of the *Ixwān*.

Thus it has been shown that Ibn Sina has developed ideas implied in the treatise of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* and demonstrated that the way of the spiritual journey of the individual cannot be undertaken alone. It must be carried out within a united group of individuals, who have banded together in a mutual spiritual agreement in which they claim one lineage and origin and exercise a single will. Within the framework of the mutual spiritual agreement formed without the intervention of the bestial soul it is possible for a single person or a lone bird to uproot the world of perversity through solidarity and cooperation. Thus in his treatise he proceeds to an intelligible formulation and elucidation of the matters discussed by the *Ixwān* in their second and forty-fifth treatises.

E. The influence of the style of composition of the twenty-second treatise on the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*

Previously it was recalled that the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* is unique among the works of Ibn Sina as regards the style of composition, even though some scholars include it in the collection of his allegorical works, like *Ḥayy ibn Yaqżān* and *Salāmān wa Absāl*. However the truth of the matter is that *Salāmān wa Absāl*, which we only know through the commentary by Xuāja Naṣīr ud-dīn Ṭūsī, and *Ḥayy ibn Yaqżān* are both stories in which the author tries to describe the spiritual world by means of allegory and therefore is clearly fall into the category. This definition does not suit the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair,* because allegory forms only one part of the treatise, the other consisting of logic.

It is interesting to note that Ibn Sina's combination of logic and allegory finds a precedent in the twenty-second treatise of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā,* which treats of the creation of the animals and their division into species. From the point of view of style of composition this treatise of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* is also unique among treatises of this collection. It begins with a logical exposition followed by an allegorical section, the purpose of which is to provide an illustration of the argument stated in the logical section. The first section presents a detailed account of how the animals were created with a relatively long passage devoted to the bird. The authors then broach the subject of the creation of Adam in a discussion based mainly on the holy books of religion. The subject is then treated in a completely allegorical manner with the aim of illustrating the question of whether man is truly the noblest of creatures or whether in many contexts other animals are nobler, in which case man ought not to have rights or dominion over them. In conclusion there is a discussion on how the man who is the vice-regent of God on earth should be and how it is possible to reach this station. In the explanation and portrayal of this subject each of the animals and birds gives an account of the special qualities and abilities of each species in allegorical language and describes the forms of cruelty inflicted on them by man who is said to be higher than all others. They do this before king Bīrasp Ḥakīm Šāh-i Mardān to whom they complain.

Thus this treatise is organized so that the subjects presented in the chapter consisting of propositions expressed in logical manner are accompanied by all the proofs and testimony of scientific and logical nature. In the second section the same subjects are presented with images in which each animal and bird gives an account of the faculties of his species. In the end the spiritual point of the treatise, which is how to elevate the human spirit, has been stated as a logical proposition and then illustrated by an allegorical story.

F. The *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and the forty-eighth treatise

The *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* believe that the salvation of the subtle spirit (*rūḥ al-laṭīf*) or soul from the world of perversion and darkness is only possible, if the individual learns how to bring the mount which is the body into the service of the rider which is the spirit in order to ride away. This becomes possible when the individual succeeds in obtaining help and companionship. In defining solidarity, the *Ixwān* stress that mutual assistance between two individuals leads them both to greater fulfillment, and in the process dispersed and scattered bodies gather strength which is transformed into a united energy. With their intellects

they succeed in achieving a united counsel and plan until all of them become like a single body and spirit.[69] Concerning the motive for uniting with the aim of companionship they say: "Then each one of them sees and learns rightly that regarding himself he will not attain perfect fulfillment, that which he wants of righteous life in the world and achieving victory and salvation in the other world except by the joining together of each one of them with his friend."[70]

The *Ixwān* emphasize that the brothers are like members of one body which reaches perfection when all the members have reached perfection. In other words the perfection of the assembly as one body and one single identity implies the perfection of each of the members. In order to be able to maintain this state of companionship the brothers adopt a testament binding them to treat one another with love and to desire the same thing for each other. The friend of one is the friend of all and they all join in the capturing of one another's enemy. They avoid those who seek things for themselves.

In the pledge of union between the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* it is said that the *Ixwān* hold one opinion and one faith and religion and that they have made a contract and a covenant which binds them to help each other and act as one man in every matter. In fact the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* show by their definition of brotherhood that they are trying to re-establish the state of joining and union in which they lived before the fall of the soul into the material world.

In the forty-eighth treatise it is said that the soul has fallen from its elevated level in the spiritual world and become a particular drowned in the sea of matter and captured in the darkness of the water. After leaving the state of union in the spiritual world souls have become dispersed in this world with each one advancing on the way in the company of the body in which it has been imprisoned. Ibn Sina presents a similar reasoning in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. According to him the birds were together in union before they met the hunter and fell into the snare. By falling into the hunter's snare they become separated from each other.

According to the treatise of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā,* each individual only thinks of himself in the circumstances of life in the world and works for his own material advancement. They compare them to passengers on board a ship which suddenly breaks up in the middle of the ocean. The passengers are thrown into the waves. One searches for a rope while another climbs onto the shoulder of a fellow passenger and, because of the strength of their fear and dread, each one thinks only of himself. They do not remember the circumstances in which they lived

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[69] Cf. *Rasā'il,* vol. IV, p. 169.

[70] *Rasā'il, ibid.*, p. 170.

previously. This is the state of souls in this world.[71] In the *Risālat aṭ-ṭair,* in the section of the story, it is said:

> "We hastened towards them and fell down into snares. Suddenly the rings closed around our necks, and the fetters entangled our wings, and the cords tightened around our feet. We hurried to move, but what we gained was more distress: we consigned our bodies to non-being and each of us busied himself with his own work and we held our hearts empty of the sorrow over agreement. We were like this for a time, until we became used to the trap and became quiet in our cages."

In the forty-eighth treatise the exile of the spirit and the pain caused by loneliness in this world is said to result from the fact that the soul is an alien which has become entangled in the corporeal world with its misfortunes of the body and perversion of matter. The author likens the situation of the soul to that of the alien sage in a foreign city who has fallen in love with a corrupt woman. She is preoccupied with eating and drinking day and night, and she wears fine clothing and lives in an expensive mansion. The sage gives her everything for her improvement, because of the excessive love which he has for her. He works for this goal day and night, until he totally forgets that he must take care of his own soul and that he must work for the city which he has left. He even forgets his own family as well as the joy he had experienced and the riches he had acquired in his own city.

The *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* describes the relationship between the exile of the spirit and its imprisonment in the prison of matter in the same manner.

At this point we can quote the comments of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* on the subject of the imprisonment and enslavement of the soul: The soul is a spiritual substance which is without need of water, food and clothing. It lives by means of its own essence, but when it enters into composition as support for the body it must work with it and compromise because of its needs and at that time must endure every disgrace and contempt, so that the body can be assured of its livelihood. The spirit does not experience peace except when it devotes itself to educating and training the body, because the needs of the body do not cease until the last day of its life. As a result a time for caring for the affairs of the spirit never comes. Therefore the individual needs a sage (*ḥakīm*) to teach him how to save the spirit from the tyranny of the desires of the body.[72]

The forty-eighth treatise of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* explains how the spirit, after having been dormant in the snare for a time, is awakened from its sleep of neglect. In perceiving its own essence and becoming aware of

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[71] Cf. *Rasā'il, ibid.*, p. 185.

[72] Cf. *Rasā'il, ibid.*, p. 183 f.

its substance, it discovers that it is in exile in this world of matter and darkness, and as a result:

> "They with their souls breathed the air of that world. It was a total pleasure, so that they wished to be united with it and they were disgusted with being inside the body. They withdrew from the pleasures of the world and wished to die, so that they could leave their bodies and escape from the darkness of the corporeal state."[73]

And Ibn Sina in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* expresses exactly the same feelings in the language of the imprisoned bird at the moment when it sees the birds flying in the air and recalls its past days: ". . . their lives were purified. They reminded me of what I had forgotten and it spoiled all that to which I had become accustomed. It troubled me so that I was dissolved with grief or my soul departed from me with regret."

In both texts memory of the past and of freedom causes the spirit/bird to experience such longing that it wishes to die immediately and break all the bonds attached to its feet.

The *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* compare this state with the state of prisoners who, after spending years in the dungeon of a prison, suddenly witness the sunrise at dawn.

G. The *Madīnat al-fāźila* and the city of the Great King

The forty-eighth treatise reports that the foundation of the spiritual *Madīnat al-fāźila*, the city in which the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* live together in solidarity and union, is located in the country of the lord of the *nāmūs al-akbar,* who is described as he "who is the king of souls and bodies".[74] The inhabitants of the city are described as a group of philosophers who do good works and who are knowledgeable about matters of the soul and its states, and all of them are said to have a good and beautiful character. The city is not situated on the coast, so that it will not be threatened by the waves nor easily reached by the inhabitants of those regions. Smoke from the surrounding cities does not cover it nor pollute its air, because it is located on the heights and is the most honored of all cities. Everything that happens in the neighboring cities reaches the eyes and ears of the people of the spiritual city. The city is founded on the virtue of the lord, and it stands

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[73] *Rasā'il, ibid.*, p. 185.

[74] *Rasā'il, ibid.*, p. 171.

on truthfulness in speech and faith, and its pillars have been fortified by faithfulness and trustworthiness.[75]

However, when the building of the city has been completed it becomes necessary to construct the ship of salvation, the means by which the body (*jasad*) will be transferred to the *Madīnat al-fāżila,* which is the dwelling place of spirits. The way to the city is open to the person whose knowledge is of the same measure as that of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā,* and the person who wishes to enter the city must pass the fortification moat by entering into the science of the soul and knowledge of the essence of the soul.

It is obvious that the city is a completely spiritual construction with no earthly reality in the material world. Its great height is a symbol of its being honored and unattainable. Sometimes it is said to be ruled over by a king designated as king of the *nāmūs al-akbar* and sometimes by a great leader (*šar' al-a' żam*) who is the king of the city. It corresponds to the way in which the philosophers identify the Universal Intellect, which is referred to as the Great King (*malik al-a'żam)* by Ibn Sina. In this context the ship of salvation is the means by which spirits are transferred to the world of spiritual beings. This ship is not really a ship but represents the body (*jasad*) itself. In fact, in this analogy the body has been endowed with spiritual characteristics, so that it can provide transportation for the spirit to its place of origin. This corresponds exactly to the account which in the section of the story in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair,* Ibn Sina gives of the spiritual journey of the bird:

> "Until the day when I looked through the meshes of the nets and I saw a group of birds that had removed their heads and wings from the fetters and had come out of their cages, ready to fly. The reminders of the old straps were still tied to their feet, but this did not hinder them, for they were bound together through freedom, nor did it bother them as their lives were purified. They reminded me of what I had forgotten and it spoiled all that to which I had become accustomed. It troubled me so that I was dissolved with grief or my soul departed from me with regret."

In fact the bird of Ibn Sina considers the assembly of birds to be a ship of salvation and he learns from them how he can also be united with the ship.

H. The *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and the forty-fourth treatise

In the forty-fourth treatise a parable is told in order to give an account of the place of origin of the spirit and its relation to spiritual

[75] Cf. *Rasā'il, ibid.*, p. 172.

individuals. In the parable a reference is made to a city which is situated on the peak of a mountain on an island. In that city there is no amassing of great fortunes, and the inhabitants act as brothers and family towards each other and are, in fact, all descendants of one single man. These people treat each other with love, friendship and fellowship, and there is no harshness, jealousy nor enmity between them.[76]

Now compare this description with the description which in the introduction of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair,* Ibn Sina gives of the brothers of truth: "except for the brothers of Truth who are assembled by divine kinship and brought together by celestial closeness. They have observed the truth with the inner sight and cleansed their innermost secret from all stain of doubt."

The treatise of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* says that one day some of the brothers were travelling by ship. Their ship was wrecked and they were thrown up on an island in which one could find all forms of natural beauty and food. However, the inhabitants of the island were monkeys who were the opposite of the first group. Their behavior was bad, they lied and only desired material gains. The materialistic monkeys forged ties with the brothers and they had children together and the monkeys bound their feet so that they were obliged to remain where they were.[77] The situation of the brothers on the island of the monkeys is described by the *Ixwān* in exactly the same way as the birds in the snare of the hunter by Ibn Sina.

In the *Rasā'il* the brothers remain on the island of the monkeys, until one day one of them has a dream, and in the dream he sees how he returns to the city from which he came and how his family comes to welcome him. When they see him, they think he is ill and understand that they cannot bring him into the city in his present condition. They remove his clothing and wash him in a well at the gate of the city. They clothe him in new clothing, seat him on a mount and bring him into the city.[78]

Compare this subject with the words of Ibn Sina, when he witnesses the brothers in a state of flight in the sky and how they help him, so that he succeeds in escaping from prison and fleeing as far as possible from the snare of the hunter, and how they set out on a trip to the city of the angels.

There are two points which should be noted here. One is that in the *Rasā'il* of the *Ixwān* the individual is made aware of his condition by means of a dream and in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* the imprisoned brother becomes aware of his past situation by the testimony of the freed

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[76] *Rasā'il, ibid.*, p. 37.

[77] *Rasā'il, ibid.*, p. 38.

[78] Cf. *Rasā'il, ibid.*, p. 38.

brothers and receives help. Thus both stories emphasize the principle of being awakened and becoming aware in prison. The second point is that in the treatise of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* the individual is helped by his brothers, so that he can enter the city on the mountain, and in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* the brothers of truth (who descend from one father and a single spiritual principle) help the imprisoned bird, so that he can flee to the city of the great king.

In the treatise of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā,* when the individual becomes awakened and sees himself in the midst of the monkeys, he becomes very sorrowful; in the *Risalat uṭ-ṭair* the individual becomes so sorrowful that he wishes to remove his body which fits like a shirt.

In the treatise of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* the process of becoming aware is described as occurring in such a way, that when the particular soul is made whole and aware of itself and wakes up from its sleep of neglect, it comes to understand its state of exile in the corporeal world. Then it regards the world of spiritual beings and witnesses its own spiritual form as it was before the bonds of the material prison were tied and sees intellectual colors and shades. All this makes him eager to fly.

The treatise of the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* speaks of the states which the individual meets on the way, after he has been made aware and has become an ascetic who meditates. It discusses how he desires with all his heart to return to the city but is unable to set out on the journey. He must find a kindred soul who will unite with him as a brother. Then when he finds a brother and recounts his dream, this helps the brother to remember what he had forgotten. They discuss between themselves how to escape from the island and set out on the road of return. They make a pact between themselves in which they pledge never to follow the road of weakness and decrepitude and to strive to the end of the road. They invite others to join them as brothers and build a ship so that they can escape from the island. First they awaken the memory of the brothers and convince them of the necessity of the task. When there are enough of them, they cut down some trees, which symbolize parents, family, connections and attachments, in order to build a ship, so they can return to their own country.

I. The bird in the forty-fourth treatise

An interesting aspect of the forty-fourth treatise in relation to the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* is the account of the bird on the island of the monkeys. In the story it is reported that the population of monkeys is ruled by a large bird. Whenever it wants to eat it hunts down a monkey and this could happen at any time of the night or day. On one occasion when the brothers, aware of their state of exile and preparing to return to

their city of origin, are cutting down trees and building a ship out of logs, the bird makes an attack with the intention of capturing a monkey. Instead it seizes one of the men and flies off with him in order to eat him. During the flight he becomes aware that his prey is not a monkey but a man. He flies with him until they reach the city from which the man originated. There the bird sets him down on the ground near his relatives and friends and returns to the island.[79]

In the treatise the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* explicate this allegory by interpreting the island as a metaphor of the world and the people living in the world as the monkeys and the friends of God (*awliyā allāh*) as the shipwrecked men who have been washed ashore on the island. The city on the summit of the mountain, which is the city of origin of the friends of God, is the dwelling of future life and the bird represents death.

In conclusion it can be observed that, despite the relative silence of the biographers, not only was Ibn Sina acquainted with the *Rasā'il ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* but he had studied them so carefully that they formed part of his intellectual stock. In writing the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* he does not refer to the different chapters of the *Rasā'il* of the *Ixwān* point by point in a specific manner, but he obviously had the contents of the *Rasā'il* present in his mind. It should be noted that in the end Ibn Sina draws a different conclusion in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* from that of the *Ixwān*. The *Ixwān* use the bird as a symbol of death by which the purified individual is transferred to the city of origin at the end of the path of his life. For Ibn Sina the spiritual phenomenon of becoming a bird can occur even in the material world. In other words, despite the bonds on his feet which are an expression for the ties of breathing and life, the individual can reach the city of the great king and there experience prophethood. At this level he is relieved of many of the sensual temptations, and he is able to attain to a life suffused by light, the source of which is the Universal Intellect.

For the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* the *risālat uṭ-ṭair* is the mission (*risāla*) of return (*ma'ād*) with the help of the angel of death, who is identified as a bird, and for Ibn Sina the *risālat uṭ-ṭair* is the mission (*risāla*) of reaching the state of prophethood and the perfect man. The *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* believe that one must die in order to return to the city of origin, while Ibn Sina believes that even during one's lifetime it is possible to journey to that city and meet the great king but that it is not possible to dwell there continuously.

The point on which Ibn Sina is in complete agreement with the *Rasā'il ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* is that the way can be traveled only within the context of brotherhood, that is, with the assistance of pure or true

[79] Cf. *Rasā'il, ibid.*, p. 39.

brothers. They maintain that by experiencing the world of union and brotherhood in the material world it is possible to experience union in the world of lights and reach the city of the great king. Thus ultimately the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* is a treatise about brotherhood and the uniting of spiritual faculties with the purpose of finding release from the prison of matter and joining the bird of the spirit. Definite proof of the relationship between the two texts is provided by the commentary in Persian of this treatise by Sahlān Sāwī, judge, philosopher and devotee of Ibn Sina. In explicating the introduction of the treatise about true and hypocritical friends he repeats word for word the discussion of the *Ixwān* on the subject of the solidarity of the pure brothers, the only difference being that one is in Arabic and the other in Persian. Thus the use of the words of the *Ixwān* to explain Ibn Sina's text is a testimony that in the opinion of Sahlān Sāwī the *Ixwān* and Ibn Sina were in complete agreement on many points.

CHAPTER IX

The *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and the *Mi'rāj-nāma*

Ibn Sina's second source of inspiration for his *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* after the *Qur'ān* is the story of the Night-Journey of Muḥammad as tradited by traditionalists (*muḥaddiṭūn*) like al-Buxārī and *Qur'ān* commentators like aṭ-Ṭabarī. This story has been interpreted and explicated in different ways by scholars representing every school of thought in Islam from the philosophers to the theologians. In the *Mi'rāj-nāma* attributed to Ibn Sina this spiritual journey has been described and explicated from the viewpoint of philosophy and expressed in the same spirit and with the same vocabulary that is found in Ibn Sina's philosophical writings.

There are different opinions among scholars as to whether or not Ibn Sina really is the author of the *Mi'rāj-nāma*. One of the reasons for these differences is that Jūzjānī in the *Risāla-yi sarguḏašt* does not list this particular treatise among the works of Ibn Sina nor is it mentioned by Ibn Abī Uṣaibi'a, whose main source of information is Jūzjānī. Another reason for hesitation in attributing it to Ibn Sina is that a number of scholars believe that there are inconsistencies in the style of composition and the vocabulary between it and works known to have been written by Ibn Sina.[1] Some of these scholars attribute the *Mi'rāj-nāma* to Abu'l-Muẓaffar Manṣūr ibn Ardašīr 'Ibādī, who died in 547 A. H. and who is famous as the author of the book *Ṣūfī-nāma*. [2] As evidence for this they adduce the testimony of a manuscript of this text which was found in the library of Murād Muḥammad Buxārī in which this work is attributed to 'Ibādī.[3] Other scholars attribute the *Mi'rāj-nāma* to Suhrawardī. Ḥājjī Xalīfa in his *Kašf uż-żunūn* counts it among the works of Ibn Sina.[4]

Māyil-Heravī, who published a critical text edition of the *Mi'rāj-nāma*, is among those scholars who are certain that it should be attributed to Ibn Sina. In justification of his position he refers to an old manuscript, *Majma' ul-baḥrain*, which is attributed to Abarkūhī. There Abarkūhī mentions that one of his students gave him *Mi'rāj-nāma* by Ibn Sina and

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[1] Cf. Mahdawī, *Fihrist*, p. 297.

[2] Cf. Ibn Sina, *Mi'rāj-nāma*, ed. Māyil-Heravī, p. 69.

[3] Mīnuvī, consequently believed that the author of the text is 'Ibādī. He has provided a microfilm of a manuscript of the *Mi'rāj-nāma* which is attributed to 'Ibādī. Cf. Dānišpažūh, *Fihrist-i nusxahā-yi kitābxāna-yi dāniškada-yi ḥuqūq wa 'ulūm-i sīyāsī wa iqtiṣādī*, p. 199-200; cf. 'Ibādī, *Ṣūfī-nāma*, p. 23.

[4] Cf. Ḥājjī Xalīfa, *Kašf aż-żnūn*, vol. III, col. 898.

asked him to rewrite it in a more comprehensible style so that he could understand it. Māyil-Heravī compares the text of Abarkūhī with the one which is attributed to Ibn Sina and concludes that the same individual is the author of both epistles. He notes, however, that the language of the version attributed to Ibn Sina is clearer and more eloquent than the one rewritten by Abarkūhī.[5]

In order to show whether or not the *Mi'rāj-nāma* is one of Ibn Sina's works or whether it was written by one of the other above-mentioned scholars, we shall examine the arguments for and against the authorship of each one.

'Ibādī was one of the learned men of the sixth century and was famous for his sermons in the whole realm of the Islamic empire.[6] His book *Ṣūfī-nāma,* written in Persian, reflects the influence of Ibn Sina's philosophical thoughts in a way which shows that he was an adherent of Ibn Sina, although he died one hundred and nineteen years after Ibn Sina. As an example of similarities he mentions ten phases in the practice of following the way and restricts the first phase to will (*irāda*) exactly as Ibn Sina did done.[7] The objection could be raised that al-Qušairī who was a also Ṣūfī master held the same opinion about the power of will (*irāda*) in regard to the path of Ṣūfism and could equally have exercised influence on 'Ibādī. Al-Qušairī could not have influenced Ibn Sina because his *Risālat al-Qušairīya* was written in 437 A. H. which is about a decade after the death of Ibn Sina. However, it should not be forgotten that Ibn Sina himself was influenced by some of the Ṣūfī masters of his time or by a Ṣūfī doctrine in general, and it could be suggested that 'Ibādī followed the same school. This would make sense if there were no further resemblance between the doctrine of Ibn Sina and that of the *Ṣūfī-nāma*. However 'Ibādī follows Ibn Sina's advice on spiritual development as presented in the last three chapters of the first book of *al-Išārāt wa't-tanbīhāt* where he demonstrates the ten practical phases which a follower *(murīd)* should master. Moreover 'Ibādī is among those Ṣūfīs who emphasize the importance of purity of intellect and believe that the path *(ṭarīqa)* is a way which should be followed in cooperation with the pure intellect and *šarī'a*. A typical statement illustrating the similarity of thought between the two works is found in the chapter on the intellect at the beginning of the *Ṣūfī-nāma*: "Know that the foundation of the way which they have smoothed is purity of intellect and the aid of the law (*šarī'a*) for this path *(ṭarīqa)* is a narrow way in the middle of the highway of mankind."[8]

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[5] Cf. Ibn Sina, *Mi'rāj-nāma*, ed. Māyil-Heravī, p. 72.

[6] Cf. 'Ibādī, *Ṣūfī-nāma*, ed. Yūsufī, p. 17.

[7] Cf. Ibn Sina, *Kitāb al-išārāt wa' t-tanbīhāt*, p. 202.

[8] Cf. 'Ibādī, *Ṣūfī-nāma*, p. 4.

Likewise, 'Ibādī's opinion about apostleship is very much reminiscent of Ibn Sina's doctrine on the same matter. In the chapter on prophethood and mission *(risāla)* 'Ibādī says: "For man the ultimate goal is prophethood and mission which they liken to the First Intellect and Universal Matter and when one reaches it all at once one turns away from the government of the bodies and in everything follows the command of spiritual essences."[9]

Beside the fact that 'Ibādī has been influenced by Ibn Sina's ideas in the *Ṣūfī-nāma,* he also uses a likeness which is identical with one found in the introduction of the *Mi'rāj-nāma*. In the *Mi'rāj-nāma* it is emphasized that if a person wishes to follow a road to a goal he must enter onto the right road so that he will reach the desired result.[10] The author points out that the person who wishes to go to Baġdād cannot set out on the road to Samarqand. In this way he wants to demonstrate that one cannot expect to experience the *mi'rāj* which is an intellectual matter in a flight of corporeal nature because the body lacks the intellectual faculty. Therefore one must carry out an intellectual command by means of the intellect. As it is stated in the *Mi'rāj-nāma*: "if a person wishes to go to Baġdād and sets out on the Samarqand road, he or she will not reach Baġdād. But when a person sets out on the Baġdād road, he or she reaches the destination."[11]

'Ibādī uses this same likeness to show that one cannot reach *ṭarīqa* except by first observing *šarī'a*. Then, in the same passage, in order to explain more, he uses again a likeness which is not found directly in the *Mi'rāj-nāma* but may have the same implication. He says if a person wishes to climb up on a roof and destroys the ladder and, instead of using a ladder, he tries to pull himself up the wall by clutching at it with his hands and teeth, he will not succeed. Here we quote the text of the *Ṣūfī-nāma*: "It is like the person who wishes to go up onto a roof and destroys the ladder to the roof and pulls himself up the face of the wall. Although he struggles for a long time and pulls himself up, he falls down in one moment."[12]

'Ibādī uses the expression 'ladder' *(nardabān)* which is the equivalent of *mi'rāj*. Aside from these similarities the language of the *Ṣūfī-nāma* and even much of the vocabulary is like that of the *Mi'rāj-nāma*.

However by comparing the language and the style of composition of the *Mi'rāj-nāma* and the *Ṣūfī-nāma* it is easy to see that these two treatises were written by two different authors. Examples of language differences include the usage of *andar* in the *Mi'rāj-nāma* and *dar* in the *Ṣūfī-nāma*

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[9] 'Ibādī, *ibid.*, p. 209.

[10] Cf. Ibn Sina, *Mi'rāj-nāma*, p. 97

[11] Ibn Sina, *Mi'rāj-nāma*, p. 97.

[12] 'Ibādī, *Ṣūfī-nāma*, p. 21.

while the former prefers the verb form *buwad* in the same contexts in which the latter uses *bāšad*. Further, the style of the *Mi'rāj-nāma* reveals an older style of writing in which the sentences are short, simple and non-technical with the frequent usage of *hamī* while the indirect object is placed after the verb. Often a few short phrases are joined together by one verb in clause-final position. The *Ṣūfi-nāma* shows a later style of writing with longer and more elaborated sentences, usage of Arabic terms, the presence of *saj'* and with a more fixed word order of subject, object, verb. A comparison of the two texts shows that the former has the typical characteristics of the fourth and beginning of the fifth century while the latter shows a later development in technical style of writing which began by the beginning of the sixth century. Moreover the two treatises differ completely in style as the author of the *Mi'rāj-nāma* seldom directly quotes a tradition (*ḥadīṯ*) or a verse of the *Qur'ān* but in the *Ṣūfi-nāma* quotations from these sources can be found on nearly every page.

Aside from all these similarities and differences it is hard to believe that the author of the two books could be the same person as they present two different doctrines in terms of the Ascension of the Prophet Muḥammad. Ibn Sina, emphasizes that it was a spiritual journey which occurred by means of the intellect[13] while in 'Ibādī's point of view, it was physical and took less than an hour.[14] Therefore these two writings are completely and fundamentally different as regards both form and content and it is impossible to assume that the author of these two works could be one and the same person. The *Ṣūfi-nāma* is a work on Ṣūfism which presents the world view of a Ṣūfī and the *Mi'rāj-nāma* is a philosophical and mystical work expressing the viewpoint of the philosopher/mystic.

Some scholars attribute the *Mi'rāj-nāma* to Suhrawardī. Mahdawī says in refuting the attribution to Suhrawardī that in an old manuscript of the National Library with number 992 which has recently come to light it is recounted that the author of the *Mi'rāj-nāma* died before the year 584 A. H. Now Suhrawardī passed away in 587. Mahdawī considers this manuscript to belong to the works attributed to Ibn Sina and he includes it among some writings which are associated with the work of Ibn Sina but for which there is no certainty. Here he gives two other names for the *Mi'rāj-nāma* which are the *Iṯbāt an-nubuwwa* and the *Muršid al-kifāya*.[15] Aside from the testimony of this manuscript there is a clear difference between the language of Ibn Sina in the *Mi'rāj-nāma* and Suhrawardī's works in Persian. First Suhrawardī makes much use of Arabic words in

[13] Cf. Ibn Sina, *Mi'rāj-nāma*, p. 119.

[14] Cf. 'Ibādī, *Ṣūfī-nāma*, p. 122 f.

[15] Cf. Mahdawī, *Fihrist*, p. 297.

his treatises. For example when Ibn Sina uses words like words *xuāb* and *bīdārī* as in the *Mi'rāj-nāma* Suhrawardī employs the expressions *yaqża* and *nawm*. Further, in the *Mi'rāj-nāma* words like *zafān* (tongue), *nibištan* (to write), *andar* (in), *andar yāft, andar yāwad* (to understand), *rāh yāwad* (may find), *ūftād* (happened), *buwad, āyad* (the last three in the meaning of 'become') are found and they are absent from the works of Suhrawarī. Furthermore, Suhrawardī often quotes the traditions and the verses of the *Qur'ān*. Over and above these traits the manner of phraseology in the works of Suhrawardī differs radically from that of the *Mi'rāj-nāma* and, in fact, the language of the *Mi'rāj-nāma* has all the earmarks of the prose of an earlier period.

A. The linguistic evidence for the authorship of Ibn Sina

Aside from the fact that Jūzjānī omits *Mi'rāj-nāma* from his list of Ibn Sina's works, the principle evidence against attributing the authorship of the treatise to Ibn Sina has been the feeling that the language differs from his other works in Persian such as the *Dāniš-nāma*. After closely examining the contents as well as the linguistic evidence it seems to me hard to deny that it is the work of Ibn Sina. In fact the similarities of content and form of composition between the *Mi'rāj-nāma* and the other Persian works of Ibn Sina far outnumber the differences. In order to justify this statement it is necessary to compare the contents and language of the *Mi'rāj-nāma* with the other Persian books of Ibn Sina to establish the similarities.

The works which can be attributed to Ibn Sina with certainty are the *Rag-šiṇāsī,* which was written in Fardajān according to Jūzjānī, and, ṭhe *Dāniš-nāma-yi 'Alā'ī* begun in Iṣfahān by Ibn Sina and completed by Jūzjānī. And the *Risāla-yi nafs*, a kind of paraphrase of the *Kitāb Ma'ād,* also written in Iṣfahān. Thus we have a sufficient amount of material at hand to compare the language of Ibn Sina in his Persian writings with that of the *Mi'rāj-nāma*.

The treatise of *Rag-sināsī* begins with an introduction which resembles that of the treatise of *Mi'rāj-nāma* in several respects *sipās mar āfrīdgār rā wa sitāyiš mar ū-rā wa durūd bar paiġāmbar-i guzīda wa ahl-i bait wa yāran-i ū* ("Thanks to the Creator and praise to him and greetings to the selected Prophet and his family and his friends.")[16]

The introduction of the treatise of the *Mi'rāj-nāma* is as follows: *sipās xudāwand-i āsmān wa zamīn rā wa sitāyiš dahanda-yi jān wa tan wa durūd bar paiġāmbar-i guzīda-yi ū Muḥammad-i muṣṭafā wa ahl-i bait*

[16] Ibn Sina, *Risāla-yi rag-šināsī*, ed. Miškāt, p. 4.

wa yārān-i pāk-i ū ("Thanks to the Lord of heaven and earth, praise to the Bestower of spirit and body. And greetings to His selected prophet, Muḥammad the Chosen, may God bless him and his family, and to the members of his house, and his pure companions.")[17]

In the *Rag-šināsī* Ibn Sina says in the first chapter that God created mankind by assembling three things: "One is the body *(tan)* which they call the horse of the body *(tāzī-yi tan)* and the trunk *(jasad)*, then the soul *(jān)* which they call the spirit *(rūḥ)* and thirdly the spirit *(ruwān)* which they call *nafs*." Then he proceeds to speak of the coarseness of the body and the subtlety of the soul and how the body is made up of limbs and the limbs of humors.[18]

In the first chapter of the *Mi'rāj-nāma* the composition of the human being is described:

> "Know that Absolute Truth, may He be exalted, created human beings from two different things. One is called body (*tan*), the other spirit (*jān*). He brought each from a different world. He brought together the body by gathering the humors and combining the elements, and He united with it the spirit, through the influence of the Active Intelligence. He adorned the body with parts,"[19]

The expressions used to indicate the body, soul and spirit are identical in the two books.

Before comparing the language of the *Dāniš-nāma* with that of the *Mi'rāj-nāma*, it is important to mention that in writing the *Dāniš-nāma* Ibn Sina was one of the first learned men to compose a scientific book in Persian after the rise of Islam.[20] In order to accomplish the task he invented many Persian expressions to replace the current Arabic equivalents that he himself had employed in his other books. A few of these terms and expressions like *bušasp* (dream) never came to be used within the realm of Persian literature, but many others like *ruwān*, *kuniš* and *nihād* were accepted. By comparing the language of the *Dāniš-nāma* with that of the *Mi'rāj-nāma*, one finds many similarities in usage of words and phraseology. Thus, for example, in both works Ibn Sina employs the terms used in the *Dāniš-nāma* in the *Mi'rāj-nāma*, Ibn Sina employs the terms *andar yāft* for *'aql* (intellect) or *andar yāwīdan* for *fahmīdan* (to understand).[21] Usage of the term *jān* (soul) instead of *nafs*, *tan* (body) for *jism* are some other examples of the same kind.

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[17] Ibn Sina, *Mi'rāj-nāma*, p. 79.

[18] Ibn Sina, *Risāla-yi rag-šināsī*, p. 4 f.

[19] Heath, *Allegory and Philosophy in Avicenna,* p. 112.

[20] Cf. Xaṭībī, *"Naṯr-i fārsī dar nīma-yi duwwum-i qarn-i čahārum wa nīma-yi qarn-I panjum wa sabk-i naṯr-i fārsī," Jašn-nāma-yi Ibn Sīnā*, p. 317.

[21].Cf. Ibn Sina, *Mi'rāj-nāma*, p. 86.

Expressions like *dānista āmad* and *paidā šud* which emphasize that the previous subject was made clear occur frequently in both texts. In the *Mi'rāj-nāma* there are remarkable expressions like *mahīn-i haštum* (the eighth highest) for the state of fixed stars which cannot be found anywhere else but in the terminology of Ibn Sina. Aside from these similarities there are some points of difference such as the absence of *mar* (an indication of the indirect object and one of the characteristics of fourth-century prose) in the *Mi'rāj-nāma*. There are also differences of style; in the *Dāniš-nāma*, Ibn Sina's main concern is to explain scientific points in a clear and concise Persian while in the *Mi'rāj-nāma*, the language is more elaborated with much imagery. However the two works were written for different purposes and the differing contents required different treatment.

In conclusion one can easily see that even with regard to language all three works must have been composed by the same individual.

The language of the *Mi'rāj-nāma*, and the *Risāla-yi nafs* can also be compared. On, the phraseology and vocabulary of the one echo that of the other. One such example is the word *ādamī*, which occurs in the *Mi'rāj-nāma* and is also found in the *Risāla-yi nafs* while it is never used in the other Persian works of Ibn Sina. Ibn Sina's contemporaries referred to this word only rarely and all without exception used the words *mardum*, *mardumān* and *mardumī*.[22] Furthermore the two treatises are in many ways similar from the point of view of phraseology.

B. The Qur'ānic and traditional background of *Mi'rāj*

The *Mi'rāj-nāma*, consists of an introduction and three chapters. The third chapter can be divided into two parts, one of which consists of the story of the *Mi'rāj* in the manner found in earlier accounts and the other a sentence by sentence commentary which is inserted into the story of the *Mi'rāj*. This work is important on the one hand because by its content and purport it is more like the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* than any of the other treatises attributed to Ibn Sina and on the other hand the story of the *Mi'rāj* is an important source of inspiration to Ibn Sina in writing the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. Therefore we will give a short presentation of the *Mi'rāj* which is the subject of the two treatises and then compare the contents of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and the *Mi'rāj-nāma* with each other.

The story of the *Mi'rāj* begins with the heavenly journey of Muḥammad from the Holy Mosque to the Further Mosque. In the

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[22] *Ādamī* is employed by Abū Manṣūr Muwaffaq ibn al-Haravī in *al-Abnīyā 'an al-ḥaqāyiq al-adwīya*. Cf. *Hazār sāl -i naṯr-i pārsī*, vol. I, p. 60; also Sahlān Sāwī employed *ādamī* in his Persian commentary of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*.

opinion of a number of scholars of theology like Ġazzālī or of tradition like aṭ-Ṭabarī as well as *Qur'ān* commentators like Xuāja 'Abdullāh Anṣārī, in the *Tafsīr kašf ul-asrār* as related by Maibudī, the heavenly journey was made by Muḥammad physically in a state of wakefulness. It is for this reason that it is regarded as one of the miracles of Muḥammad and, in the opinion of these Islamic scholars, was an experience which none of the Prophets before him had. Another group of scholars, including Anīs ibn Mālik, consider that it occurred when Muḥammad was neither asleep or awake.[23] Earlier traditionists relate that according to the Prophet himself he was in the Ka'ba in a state between sleep and wakefulness when he heard Gabriel call him. In fact this is the same tradition which Ibn Sina evokes as the basis of his story in the beginning of the treatise of the *Mi'rāj-nāma*. Many other scholars consider that the *Mi'rāj* occurred while the Prophet was asleep and thereby accept the statement by 'Āiša and Mu'āwiya that they knew that the *Mi'rāj* occurred in a dream. Maibudī rejects this theory in his exegetical work, the *Tafsīr-i kašf ul-asrār*, and adds that if the *Mi'rāj* had taken place in a dream it could no longer be considered as proof of a miracle because this is an experience which could be had by anyone experience.[24]

Because there are two references to a dream of the Prophet in the Sūra of the Star ("Indeed he saw him another time") a number of commentators believe that the *Mi'rāj* occurred twice, an interpretation which was supported by Imām Ja'far Ṣādiq and other imams.[25]

As regards the time of the *Mi'rāj* various different traditions have been passed down to us. For example aṭ-Ṭabarī maintains that it occurred before the *Ḥijra* prior to the birth of Fāṭima; he recounts that the Prophet brought back an apple from Paradise and after he had eaten it Fāṭima was conceived. When the Prophet later kissed a strand of Fāṭima's hair, he said that it gave off the odor of Paradise.[26] Maibudī in the *Tafsīr-i kašf ul-asrār* states that the *Mi'rāj* occurred on Monday night, the 16th of Rabī' al-awwal, one year before the *Ḥijra*. According to a tradition *(ḥadīṯ)* it took place on the 19th day of the month of Ramażān and one and a half years before the *Ḥijra*.[27]

There is also disagreement about the starting point of the *Mi'rāj*. Thus some *Qur'ān* scholars, like Maibudī in his *Kašf al-asrār,* have adopted the house of Umm Hānī, the daughter of the uncle of the Prophet, and some, like aṭ-Ṭabarī, prefer the Ka'ba. There is no

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[23] Cf. Maibudī, *Tafsīr-i kašf ul-asrār wa 'uddat ul-abrār mansūb bi Xuāja 'Abdullāh Anṣārī*, vol. V, p. 480.

[24] Cf. Maibudī, *ibid.*, p. 483.

[25] Cf. Ibn Sina, *Mi'rāj-nāma*, p. 14.

[26] Cf. *Tarjuma-yi tafsīr aṭ-Ṭabarī,* ed. Yaġmā'ī, vol. II, III, p. 915-917.

[27] Cf. Maibudī, *Tafsīr*, vol. V, p. 484.

indication in the Sūra of the Night Journey of where the Further Mosque is located but all the commentators and biographers including Ibn Hišām and aṭ-Ṭabarī and later scholars accept that it was in Jerusalem.[28]

The lexical meaning of *mi'rāj* is 'ladder' and traditionally it always refers to the heavenly journey of the Prophet which consists of two stages. One is called *al-Isrā'* which refers to the night journey of the Prophet who, mounted on the back of Burāq[29] and guided by Gabriel, journeyed to the Further Mosque. The second stage is called the *Mi'rāj* and begins on the roof of the Further Mosque and continues until the Lote-tree of the Far Boundary can be seen. As documented by the commentaries and the traditions relating to the Sūra of the Night Journey the Prophet ascended from the roof of the mosque by means of a ladder with one rung of silver and one rung of gold. The exegetical commentary *Kašf ul-asrār* provides the following description:

> "Then Gabriel took my hand and led me to a rock. Gabriel raised his voice and called out to Michael. Michael raised his voice and called each member of the assembly of angels by name and they brought the ladder (*mi'rāj*) from paradise to the heaven of the world and from the heaven of the world they brought it to Jerusalem. The *Mi'rāj* was like a ladder (*nardabān)* with one end resting on the rock and the other end in the heaven of the world. One side of it was of red ruby, the other side was of green chrysolite and one of the rungs was of gold and one of silver, one of ruby, one of emerald and one of pearl."[30]

While the word *mi'rāj* does not occur in the Sūra of the Night Journey (*al-Isrā'*), the root *'-r-j* does occur in various forms in other sūras in the *Qur'ān*. It occurs once as a plural *(ma'ārij)* in the meaning of 'stairs' and also as the name of a sūra which refers to God as 'Lord of the *ma'ārij*. The root *'-r-j* occurs in five other passages as finite verbs to express the ascension of the command of God on the day whose measure is five thousand years (*Qur.* 32: 5), as the antonym of *nuzūl* 'descent' (*Qur.* 34: 2; 57: 4), to express the ascension of the spirit and the angels on the day whose measure is five thousand years (*Qur.* 70: 5) and to climb up the cords to heaven (*Qur.* 15: 14). In summary the root *'-r-j* occurs a total of seven times in the *Qur'ān* in different forms whereas the term *mi'rāj* does not appear in the *Qur'ān*.

Despite the fact that there are only a few verses dedicated to the story of the *Mi'rāj* of the Prophet in the *Qur'ān* there is such an abundance of tradited material and interpretations in the traditions *(ḥadīṯ)* and

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[28] To find more examples, cf. *Tafsīr-i kašf ul-asrār*, vol. 5, p. 487

[29] Burāq is a winged animal smaller than a horse and bigger than a donkey according to the traditionalists and the exegetes.

[30] Maibudī, *Tafsīr*, *ibid.*, p. 487.

commentaries *(tafsīr)* that a large body of specialized literature has grown up around this subject. The *Mi'rāj-nāma* of Ibn Sina is a philosophical interpretation of one of these traditions with a few additions from other sources and borrowings from the commentaries and biographies which appeared before him. In consequence the story was definitely not created by Ibn Sina; he simply took over the traditional material and provided it with a philosophical commentary.

C. A comparison of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and the story of the Ascension in the *Mi'rāj-nāma*

The *Mi'rāj-nāma* attributed to Ibn Sina consists of an introduction and three chapters. The third chapter in which the story of the ascension is presented falls into two parts, the recounting of the traditional story accompanied by the commentary made from the viewpoint of philosophy. It is important to note at this point that the contents of the *Mi'rāj-nāma* are so similar to those of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* that it is possible to use the commentary of Ibn Sina in the *Mi'rāj-nāma* as a commentary and explanation of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. Before exploiting the contents of the *Mi'raj-nama* in the commentary of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* it is necessary first to show the similarities of the two treatises which are the production of the thought of one individual. Fundamentally Ibn Sina is treating different aspects of one phenomenon. In the *Mi'raj-nama* he demonstrates the ascension of a prophet who has reached the state of perfect prophethood and in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* he explains his own ascension and shows how he thereby has acquired the same honor and validity of the ultimate station of prophethood or wisdom as is set forth in the *Dāniš-nāma* and the *Risāla-yi nafs*.

In the *Mi'rāj-nāma* the Prophet reaches a point where he sees the angel in person and this is the state which precedes he reaches the last stage of perfection in his prophethood. Similarly, in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* the traveler (the bird) journeys towards a station until he perceives the angels in the form of birds. This is the state which precedes the arrival at the court of the Greatest King *(Malik al-A'żam)*. In this manner one can conclude that the *Mi'rāj-nāma* is the description of the spiritual journey of a Prophet who becomes more perfect in his prophethood and the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* is the philosophical journey in which the wise man becomes enlightened; both of them must pass through several stages in order to complete their spiritual journeys which are similar to each other in many respects. The *Mi'rāj-nāma* opens the story of the *Mi'rāj* with the words of the Prophet: "I was sleeping one night in the house. It was night with thunder and lightning. No animal made a sound, no bird

chirped, no person was awake. I was not asleep, but lying between sleep and wakefulness."[31] Ibn Sina who interprets this as symbolizing the state of the Prophet before the Ascension says: "That is, I had been desirous of perceiving truths by means of insight for a long time."[32]

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* the narrator says: "Will anyone among my brothers lend an ear that I may tell him some part of my burden?"

The words of Ibn Sina which open the *Risāla* are those of one who suffers from being trapped in a certain situation and who seeks the way to salvation and freedom. His voice is that of a prisoner who seeks help. This desire for the perception of spiritual worlds and union with the world of light emerges with intensity in the continuation of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. It can easily be seen that the cry for help which the author brings forth in pain at the beginning of the *Risāla* is in fact a cry for a companion or companions with whom to share the burden of pain in the dark prison shaped by the distance from the world of wisdom and light. The pain is caused by separation from the source of wisdom; it involves the feelings and understanding of the pain of awareness and awakedness in relation to the situation in which he lives and the station towards which he wishes to go. He is in a state of sleep and awakening. This is a paraphrase of the same desire which Ibn Sina explains at the beginning of the *Mi'rāj-nāma* in the description of the state of the Prophet who had for a long time experienced intense longing for a deeper insight into spiritual matters.

Both the Prophet and the narrator of the *Risāla* are in a state of mind in which they wish to comprehend higher levels of existence and expect to travel this way and are searching for a companion on the way.

In the *Mi'raj-nama* Ibn Sina says that the night is more suitable for understanding spiritual worlds, because at night emotional preoccupations and physical obstacles are less obtrusive. In the introduction of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* he states that he is seeking for a brother with whom to share his pain but imposes the condition that he must be pure and of the same mind so that he will be able to support him. He then proceeds to describe what he calls false friends. In fact it is possible to interpret the false friends of Ibn Sina as referring to the inner faculties which are faulty, insufficient and focused on material things. At the precise moment when they are needed they fail him. Thus the false friends are metaphors for the vegetative soul and the animal soul which disregard the needs of the human soul and drag the entire existence down to degradation and meanness. This interpretation is corroborated by the *Mi'rāj-nāma* which states: "'It was a night with thunder and lighting' means that the succor of the celestial caller prevailed, so that the

[31] Heath, *Allegory*, p. 125.

[32] Heath, *ibid.*, p. 125.

irascible faculty died and the faculty of imagination ceased its operation."[33]

The story of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqżān* supports the interpretation that 'false friends' are those self-same faculties of the vegetative and animal souls. In the preface Ḥayy says to the author of the treatise: "These friends who surround you and never leave you are bad companions and I am afraid they will seduce you and you will remain in bondage to them"[34] and then he specifies who the companions are that he is referring to. ("but the friend at your left is nasty, very degrading, gluttonous and promiscuous" and that the only way to liberate oneself from them is that "you become a traveler to the cities where they cannot go").[35] Finally he draws the conclusion that only when Ibn Sina has joined Ḥayy ibn Yaqżān on the spiritual journey in which there is no place for the vegetative or the animal soul will he be rid of these friends and travel with true friends. Thus in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqżān* the author is once again made aware of the existence of the false friends by Ḥayy, the herald of the unseen. In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* Ibn Sina defines them and identifies their exterior symbols. He explains that as long as the individual is a prisoner in the bonds of desire of the vegetative and animal souls, he will naturally associate with persons who possess these same characteristics, thus implying that a man's exterior associates can be taken as a likeness of his interior associates. The means of liberation from these bonds can be found in breaking off relations with false friends and joining the true brothers. The latter have abandoned their attachments to the world and therefore it is easy for them to break up from their lodgings and travel the way. They will not abandon him in time of need and will help him in his flight toward the light.

In the introduction of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair,* Ibn Sina refers to the importance of the presence of the herald of the unseen. It is he who summons the faculties of the human soul or the brothers of truth which have heavenly roots and assembles both the interior faculties as well as their exterior likenesses. In the section of the narration (*ḥadīṯ*) he demonstrates the importance of the herald of the unseen who appears here in the form of a flock of birds who have liberated themselves from the material prison. One sees the effect of the summons on the blissfully ignorant author of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* who believes that life in a cage and death are the essence of life and prison the essence of freedom. From the moment his eye catches sight of the free birds and he recalls his previous condition the whole of his existence aches and longs for

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[33] Heath, *Allegory,* p. 125.

[34] Cf. Ibn Ṭufail, *Zinda-yi bīdār*, Frūzānfarr, Pers. trans. "*Qiṣṣa-yi Ḥayy ibn Yaqżān,*" p. 165.

[35] Ibn Ṭufail, *ibid.*, p. 165.

liberation and reunion with the world of light. Here the remembrance, which follows upon the appearance of the flock of free birds or the brothers of truth whose project is the journey to the world of spirituality, plays the role of the figure of the herald of the unseen as it awakens him from his deep sleep and prepares himself for the journey.

In the *Mi'raj-nama* Gabriel awakens the Prophet from his sleep: "When he reached me, he embraced me and kissed me between my two eyes and said, 'O Sleeper, arise! How long you slumber'"[36]

After that Gabriel takes the Prophet on a journey towards the appearance of God. It is worthwhile noting that the prophet rides Burāq to Jerusalem accompanied by Gabriel who calls Muḥammad his brother. In other words both Burāq and Gabriel may symbolize the two wings of the Prophet, one representing the faculty of *'aql-i 'āmila* and *'aql-i 'ālima* which join him as his true brothers in order to take him to the perfection of his prophethood. Since Ibn Sina has emphasized in his treatises including the *Mi'rāj-nāma* that the body is the horse of the soul, it can be concluded that Burāq may stand for the absolute perfection of the faculties related to the physical aspects of the Prophet while Gabriel may represent the state of the absolute completion of the soul.

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* the imprisoned bird, upon catching sight of the free birds, calls to them to approach him and to help him fly but they flee from him out of fear of the hunter and his trap.

In the *Mi'raj-nāma* Ibn Sina says in commenting on the obstinacy of Burāq,

> "That is, because I was in the physical world, I wanted to sit on it, that is, to unite with it. But it would not accept, until the Holy Faculty cleansed me of the preoccupations of ignorance and impediments of the body, so that I became pure and, through it, attained the emanation and beneficence of the Active Intelligence."[37]

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* the imprisoned bird wins the acceptance of the birds whom he needs to serve as his wings in flight by recalling and declaring that also he is aware of the ancient covenant which God made with the sons of Adam on the first day, the recollection of the covenant of "am I not your Lord? They said, Yes" (*Qur.* 7: 172)In this context the recollection of these words means breaking the chains of bondage of the animal and bestial souls (Satan) and joining in the service of God because it is stipulated in the covenant that the sons of Adam will accept only God as their Provider. It is a declaration that the imprisoned bird wishes to be united with the active intellect and light.

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[36] Ibn Ṭufail, *Zinda*, p. 126.

[37] Heath, *Allegory*, p. 127.

The *Mi'rāj-nāma* illustrates how the Prophet is afraid of being imprisoned once more by his enemy (Satan) and Gabriel assures him that he will not be delivered into the hands of his enemy and requests him to be observant and courageous. Ibn Sina interprets this as follows: "That is, illuminate the faculty of memory and obey me so that I may remove difficulties from you"[38]

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* the enemy is given a visible form in the hunter and the birds in the snare symbolize how he strives to keep them in the bondage of animal desires.

In the *Mi'raj-nāma* the Prophet tells Gabriel: "O Brother, an enemy has taken control of me" From the point of view of philosophy and religion the enemy is Satan who has been aiming at the destruction of the souls of man. Ibn Sina and the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* identify the enemy Satan as the faculties of the vegetative and animal souls which cast ties around the neck of the human being and ride him as their mount.

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* the journeying birds address the following words to the newly freed bird, "'There are regions ahead of us which you must cross before you will be safe. Follow our tracks so that we may save you and guide you on the right way'". Thus there are stations ahead of them which they must cross without halting so as to avoid the danger of falling into a trap. In other words the birds must fly onward without stopping until they have reached a place of comparative safety. If they were to heed the voice of the hunter on the way they would be ensnared in the same conditions as those they escaped from at the beginning of the journey.

In the *Mi'rāj-nāma* the narrator of the story says: "When I had started on the road and passed the mountains of Makka, a traveler came after me and called out, "Stop!" Gabriel said, "Do not speak, go on!" So I went on." In commenting on this stage Ibn Sina says that it is in reality the traveler's own faculty of imagination which follows his tracks on the way of spirituality and calls to him and by means of tricks tries to hold him back. The faculty of imagination is common to all animals and serves them in place of the faculty of wisdom. The person who still avails himself of the faculty of imagination while enjoying the fruits of the faculty of wisdom remains at the level of the animals and a prisoner of the bestial soul.[39]

According to the *Mi'rāj-nāma* when the Prophet had crossed the mountains he reached Jerusalem. It should be remembered that Jerusalem is a city built on top of a mountain and that the Further Mosque generally thought to be located in that city. The following statement in the *Ḥudūd ul-'ālam min al-maširiq ila'l-maġrib*

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[38] Heath, *ibid.*, p. 126.

[39] Cf. Ibn Sina, *Dāniš-nāma*, *ibid.*, p. 96.

corroborates this: "Jerusalem is a city on a mountain and in it there is no flowing water and in it there is a temple which the Muslims come from everywhere to visit on pilgrimage."[40] Nāṣir-i Xusrau in the *Safar-nāma* states: "Jerusalem was built on top of a mountain."[41]

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* Jerusalem is not mentioned by name but only intimated in the following passages, "The flight took us between the two flanks of the mountain of God, through a green and fertile, no a rather barren and devastated valley. We flew until we put its borders behind us. We crossed that region and reached the summit of the mountain." This means that after the birds continued onward in the valley between the two flanks of the mountain of God they reached the summit of the mountain. One should remember that Makka is located in a valley surrounded by mountains and the flanks of these mountains dominate the valley which is dry and denuded. Jerusalem, on the other hand, is a mountainous city in which fruit-trees, citrus fruits and olives grow in abundance. In the aforementioned story of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqżān* when Ḥayy is introduced he recollects that Jerusalem is his birthplace. In short Jerusalem represents the ultimate station on earth in which the human being reaches the final stage of purification from the animal and vegetative souls; it is the place where he grows wings for the flight to the heavens. This point is referred to in both the *Mi'raj-nāma* and the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and in my opinion it is the summit upon which the birds of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* alight after crossing the valley without water or grass to reach the station where the ascetic learns how to bring the dual power of the world of matter, the vegetative soul and the animal soul, under his control. As a result he stands on a platform from which he can fly toward the ultimate stations and reach the state of the active intellect. In the *Mi'rāj-nāma*, Ibn Sina makes the following statement which supports the statement above. He says that in Jerusalem three cups were set before the Prophet, one containing wine, one water and one milk and he drank the milk which is the symbol of the victory of the angelic faculty of speech. Then he describes the human level as follows: "Humankind is (such) by virtue of being closer to the angelic and further from the devilish and bestial."[42] He takes the wine to be the symbol of the animal soul, water the symbol of the vegetative soul and milk the symbol of the human soul and the person who chooses the latter over the other two dominates them.[43] However, at this level the faculties of the human spirit have not yet become perfect. Only when they have entered the valley of the heavens and seen the light of the eighth heaven will they reach perfection.

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[40] Cf. *Ḥudūd ul-'ālam min al-mašriq ila'l-maġrib*, ed. Aḥmadī, p. 447.

[41] Nāṣir-i Xusrau, *Safar-nāma*, p. 26.

[42] Ibn Sina, *Mi'rāj-nāma*, p. 107.

[43] Cf. Ibn Sina, *ibid.*, p. 107.

According to the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* when the birds reach the summit of the mountain which has been identified as Jerusalem in the present study there are still eight more summits in front of them. This means that they have left behind them the level of the Night Journey in which the Prophet was transported from Makka to Jerusalem on the wings of Burāq. It is a sign of the journey from the vegetative and the animal souls to the level of the human being and the arrival at the utmost limit below the heaven of the moon.

The *Mi'rāj-nāma* recounts that after reciting the prayer with the prophets in Jerusalem the Prophet ascends to heaven on a ladder with one rung of gold and another of silver. Ibn Sina interprets gold as a metaphor for inner feelings with silver representing exterior feelings. In the subsequent description of the journey of the Prophet to the different levels of heaven he takes the first heaven as the sphere of the moon, the second as Mercury, the third as Venus, the fourth as the sun, the fifth heaven as Mars, the sixth as Jupiter and the seventh as Saturn. After that he speaks as follows of the sphere of the fixed stars in which the Lote-tree of the Far Boundary and paradise are located: "By this he means the eighth sphere, the sphere of the fixed stars. The constellations are there."[44]

The *Mi'rāj* is the heavenly journey which is undertaken by means of the ladder and after ascending the Prophet is confronted by eight levels or heavens. The mountain and heaven are referred to in exactly the same way in the two treatises.

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* the summit of the eighth mountain is in the highest heaven and it is invisible because of its extreme height while in the *Mi'rāj-nāma* the Lote-tree of the Far Boundary is in the heaven of the fixed stars.

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* the traveler finds birds with the sweetest of voices and the multi-colored beautiful wings who treat him in the most pleasant manner on the eighth mountain.

In the *Mi'raj-nama* the spiritual angels, whose function is to praise and worship, live in the fixed heaven which is paradise itself. It should be recalled that in religious works it is usual for the song of the bird to be considered as praise of God. Therefore the angels speaking their praise and singing birds are two ways of expressing the same phenomenon.

Ibn Sina says in his commentary of this part of the *Mi'rāj-nāma*:

> "'I saw many angels busy praising God and affirming His unity, all immersed in grace.' That is, abstract souls, free of concupiscent and irascible desire. They are pure. For each human being whose soul becomes pure and abstract in learning and knowledge, after becoming separated from the body, is held by Absolute Truth, may

[44] Cf. Ibn Sina, *ibid.*, p. 112.

He be exalted, in neither place nor locality. He makes them like angels, adorned with eternal bliss."[45]

There in the eight heaven, according to the *Mi'rāj-nāma*, the Prophet meets a great, glorious and most beautiful angel who introduces himself as Michael and who urges him to ask questions about everything he finds difficult and to request whatever he desires.

In the Arabic text of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* there is no reference to Michael but in the Persian translation of this text by Suhrawardī he is indirectly mentioned as the ruler of the eighth mountain. It is he who feels sympathy for the birds when informed of their affliction and leads them to the city of the Great King.[46] In the *Mi'rāj-nāma* when the Prophet has been received by the angel Michael he says:

"When I was finished with greeting and questioning him, I said, 'I have suffered much pain and trouble to reach the place where I am. My goal in coming here was that I attain knowledge and direct vision of Absolute Truth, may He be exalted. Guide me to Him so that I attain my desire"[47]

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* when the birds dwelling on the eighth mountain become informed of the tribulations of the migrating birds they guide them to the city of the Great King and tell them that his abode is located behind the mountain. Likewise the travelling birds become aware that the great king will be able to solve their problems and smooth the way for them.

In the *Mi'rāj-nāma* the author says: "That angel took my hand, transported me through several thousand veils, and bore (me) to a world in which I saw nothing like what I had seen in this world. When he brought me to the Presence of Glory, the command came to me: 'Draw nearer!"[48]

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* when the birds reach the city of the king they receive permission to enter and when they enter through the gateway of the king they see a sight the likes of which they have never seen before Then they pass on and the veil is lifted from before their faces and they enter into a courtyard of utter brilliance from whence they enter into the presence of the King.

There the birds become so enraptured and stupefied at the sight of the beauty and light of the king that they forget their complaint.

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[45] Ibn Sina, *ibid.*, p. 113.

[46] Cf. Spies and Khatak, *Three Treatises on Mysticism,* p. 44.

[47] Ibn Sina, *Mi'raj-nama*, p. 115.

[48] Ibn Sina, *ibid.*, p. 117.

In the *Mi'rāj-nāma* the author continues: "From being in awe of God, I forgot everything that I had seen and known. Such unveiling, grandeur, and pleasure from proximity was produced that you would say that I was intoxicated."[49]

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* the king restores them with his firm kindness and wisdom and gives them the courage to address him.

In the *Mi'rāj-nāma* the narrator describes his reaction, "So affected was I by (divine) proximity that I began to tremble. The command was coming, 'Draw nearer!' When I drew nearer, He said, 'Fear not, be calm!'" Ibn Sina considers this fear and swooning to be a metaphor for the complete extinguishing of the animal and natural faculties and he comments on conversing with God in even more beautiful words:

> "That is, the reality of the discourse of the Necessary Existent, may it be exalted and sanctified, was unveiled to me. For its speech is not like the speech of creatures, with pronunciation and sound. Its speech is the affirmation of knowledge through pure abstraction of the soul. (It conveys) what it wishes by way of universality, not particularity."[50]

According to the author in the *Mi'rāj-nāma*: "The command came, 'Desire something!' I said, 'Give permission that whatever I encounter, I (can) ask until its difficulties are solved."

In the *Risāla* the birds request God to remove the bonds from their feet so that they may remain forever in His presence. In other words by removing the bonds which tie them to the material world they will remain forever in the spiritual world and be united with the Universal Intelligence. The answer of the King is, however, that their time has not yet come and that they must return and turn the matter over to the hunter.

In the *Mi'rāj-nāma* Ibn Sina specifies that the journey was intellectual and that by terrestrial measure no time passed.

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* he says that some think he has lost his mind and they recommend a cure for him. They say, "Birds do not speak and how can you fly?" Obviously they interpret his words literally as referring to a physical journey and for this reason find his discourse contrary to reason whereas in the *Mi'rāj-nāma* he specifically states that the voyage is spiritual and that the discourse of the birds is without speech, word or sound.

At the end of the *Mi'rāj-nāma* he maintains that this subject is not easy to understand for the multitude and that it is natural that many will never reach an understanding of it. He excuses those who do not understand

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[49] Ibn Sina, *ibid.*, p. 117.

[50] Ibn Sina, *ibid.*, p. 118.

these secrets because of insufficient wisdom and concludes with this prayer: "May God, may he be exalted, grant the favor of true speech and true knowledge."

Likewise at the end of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* he seeks help from God and says that the person who does not believe in what he has said will experience loss. He then concludes his speech with a verse from the *Qur'ān*: "And those who do wrong shall surely know by what overturning they will be overturned." (*Qur.* 26: 227)

CHAPTER X

The *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and the eighth, ninth and tenth classes (*Maqāmāt al-'ārifīn)* of the book of *al Išārāt wa't-tanbīhāt*

Baihaqī is the only biographer of Ibn Sina who explicitly states that he believes that the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* was written while the author was in the prison of Fardajān.[1] Among modern scholars the question was raised indirectly by Corbin who considers this to be possible and even probable but does not openly declare his support for this opinion.[2] The continuation of his discussions shows, however, that he does, in fact, support the hypothesis that the treatise was written in the prison of Fardajān. This is because Corbin, like the majority of the biographers of Ibn Sina including Jūzjānī, is certain that the treatise of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqżān* was written in the prison of Fardajān, and he believes that the contents of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqżān* and the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* are intimately related to and complement each other. Thus in Corbin's view of the relation between the allegorical treatises of Ibn Sina (*Ḥayy ibn Yaqżān*, *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and *Salāmān wa Absāl*) *Ḥayy ibn Yaqżān* constitutes the first part or introduction in which the devotee receives from his spiritual guide a treatise inviting him to embark on a spiritual journey and the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* represents a later stage in which the devotee accepts the treatise of invitation and sets out on a spiritual journey. Thus Corbin considers the two treatises to have been composed at the same stage in the intellectual development of the author.[3]

Based on points of comparison with other texts such as the *Mi'rāj-nāma* and especially the book of *al-Išārāt wa't-tanbīhāt* it is my opinion that Ibn Sina wrote the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* during the last years of his life when he was living in Iṣfahān. The basic concept of the *Mi'rāj-nāma* appears to be similar to it and therefore they appear to be contemporary. The *Mi'rāj-nāma* describes the spiritual journey which leads the Prophet to the degree of perfection in prophethood, while the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* describes Ibn Sina's own *mi'rāj* in which he succeeds to the degree of perfection in wisdom. Thus it is possible to see clearly the influence of the *Mi'rāj-nāma* on the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair,* as was demonstrated in Chapter IX of the present study in which the two texts were compared in detail. Furthermore, a point of interest in this

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[1] Baihaqī, *Tārīx al-ḥukamā al-Islam*, ed. Kurd 'Alī, p. 50

[2] Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital,* English trans. Trask, p. 184.

[3] Cf. Corbin, *ibid.,* pp. 43, 184.

context is to be found in the *Rasā'il of Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* which suggests that the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* was written in Iṣfahān; according to the *Ixwān* the *mi'rāj* can only take place after the age of fifty years and is the highest level that the brothers can reach in this life.[4] And Ibn Sina was more than fifty years old in Iṣfahān and it is at this same time that he wrote the treatise of the *Mi'rāj-nāma.*

The main support of my hypothesis, however, comes from the book of *al-Išārāt wa't-tanbīhāt* which is considered to be the last book written by Ibn Sina in which the discussion of many points, especially in the section on the stations of the mystics, is so similar to the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* that one can explicate the treatise with the help of passages from this section. It is noteworthy that in this book Ibn Sina gives a description of the stations of the mystics and in no other work does he speak of these matters with such clarity. It is possible to conclude that in the last years of his life Ibn Sina reached the ninth level of his *Ḥikmat al-mašriqiya* and that he

crystallized his theory and formulated it clearly in the *Išārāt.* At the same time he illustrated the theory in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair.*

It should be noted at this point that in the treatise of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqżān* Ibn Sina does not speak of the way of the mystics but only of the process of becoming aware of the spiritual worlds, while in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and the ninth and tenth classes of the book of *al-Išārāt wa't-tanbīhāt* the principle subject is a description of the way of the mystic. This will become clear in the comparison of the contents of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and the stations of the mystics in the book of the *Išārāt.*

The *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* contains a description of the stations to which the brothers of truth travel. It also explains who they are and where they come from as well as how they have been made aware. It describes how they gradually acquire wings and unite with each other and fly from the prison of the material to the world of the angels. As a result of the flight they become possessors of knowledge of the spiritual worlds.

As it was discussed before when Ibn Sina speaks of the brothers of truth he is speaking of the union of the positive inner faculties of the individual on the one hand and the true external friends of the individual on the other. The positive inner faculties" consist of the intellectual faculties, which must be made shining and visible; they prepare the individual for understanding the spiritual worlds, and "the positive external faculties" consist of a number of individuals who have a common goal and provide each other with help on the way to spiritual perfection. The ninth class of the book of the *Išārāt* has the following comment on the union of the positive inner forces,

> "Mysticism begins with withdrawal, shaking off the self, abandoning and passing away from everything; and in reunion wholeness appears, and that reunion of the gathering of

[4] Cf. *Rasā'il ixwān aṣ-ṣafā,* vol. IV, p. 57.

all the true qualities in the disciple stems from sincerity which leads to one true attribute after which one abides and remains in it."[5]

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* Ibn Sina does not explicitly state that the individual must partake in a circle of brothers of truth but rather illustrates this necessity indirectly and leaves it to the reader to interpret his meaning, " O Brothers of Truth! Spread in the world and join together! Open your heart to one another, and let each unveil his heart before his brother, so that you may instruct and perfect each other!" In the ninth class he discusses the question of solidarity and how necessary it is in human society in a manner which is nearly identical with the way in which the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* treat the subject in their treatise on geometry. He says in this regard that the human being cannot succeed when he works alone but must receive help from people like himself. He maintains that each individual should work to remove the burden from the shoulders of the other. Then he refers to justice and to fair laws governing the relations between men observing that obedience to laws and heeding the call to justice brings a large reward in nearness to God, work alone and independently but can only live in cooperation with other persons of his own kind with the barter and exchange which is current among them, in which each one comp "Because the human being is not constituted in such a way that he can carry out his work alone and independently but can only live in cooperation with other persons of his own kind with the barter and exchange which is current among them in which each one completes the work of the other."[6]

Thus Ibn Sina expresses the same opinion as the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā*, when he maintains that without the union of all the faculties it is not possible for one's work to progress and that this union is comprised of two parallel aspects, the exterior individuals who are of the same disposition and all the faculties of the human soul of which I spoke earlier. Also in describing the stations of the mystics in the ninth class of the *Išārāt*, Ibn Sina emphasizes the parallel inner and outward cooperation in the same manner as in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. Ultimately, he considers the mystic to be a person who has gathered all the spiritual levels within himself, which is the same way in which he defines the brothers of truth. In other words the manner in which Ibn Sina defines the brothers of truth in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* is the same as his definition of the mystic in the Stations of the mystics (*Maqāmāt al-'ārifīn*) in the ninth and tenth classes: " The mystic does not desire anything other than the First Reality *(al-ḥaqq al-awwal)* and he does not recognize anything higher. He worships only it and he holds only it, as worthy of worship."[7]

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[5] Ibn Sina, *Kitāb al-išārāt*, ed. Forget, p. 204.

[6] I bn Sina, *Kitāb al-išārāt,* p. 200.

[7] Ibn Sina, *ibid.,* p. 200.

Here Ibn Sina considers the mystic to be the one who testifies about the Sūra of Sincere Religion (*al-Ixlāṣ*): " Say: He is God, One, God, the Everlasting Refuge, who has not begotten, and has not been begotten, and equal to Him is not any one" (*Qur.* 112: 1-4). And when the individual speaks these words in his spiritual language, he purifies and cleanses himself of every thing which is other than God and becomes united with the Truth. In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* the identity of the brothers of truth is discussed in the following manner:" the Brothers of Truth who are assembled by divine kinship and brought together by celestial closeness. They have observed the Truth with inner sight and cleansed their innermost secret from all stains of doubt. A society such as theirs will not be united except by the herald of a divine summons."

Thus Ibn Sina holds that the brothers of truth or mystics are persons who live together in spiritual union with united spiritual faculties, who have either diminished or completely extinguished the grasp of the bestial soul on their bodies and no longer busy the spiritual faculties with hardship and violence.

A. Mortification

In the testament (*wāṣīyya*) of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* Ibn Sina speaks of mortification in a general way and informs that the brothers of truth that they must practice it, before they can understand the different stations. He emphasizes the need for solidarity with friends and seclusion from strangers. The mystic should close his door to the world and draw his head into the interior of his thoughts and engage in an examination of his inner self. The mystic should learn to keep secrets, wear the veil and practice dissimulation and thus act in such a way that persons around him cannot read his interior and cause him harm. It is for this reason that they Ibn Sina recommends that behave like the hedgehog saying, " O Brothers of Truth! Conceal yourselves like hedgehogs when they retract their heads and display your inner being and cover your appearance! For, I swear by God, that, indeed, the manifestation is for your innermost being and concealment is for your outside." In the tenth class he says the following on the same subject, "Each time the soul is able to keep its inner feeling under control, the outer feelings become weakened and the (troublesome) matter about which one should be wary does not return to the soul."[8] This means that the soul becomes free to engage in developing the human faculties of reason.

In the *Maqāmāt al-ʿārifīn* all of Ibn Sina's efforts are directed toward showing the individual how he can transcend the desires and wishes of the animal soul thereby rendering them negligible and unimportant, so that he

[8] Ibn Sina, *Kitāb al-išārāt*, p. 211.

can devote himself entirely to the soul and its needs. This involves setting out on the way of reasoning intelligence. It means recognizing the hidden and inner aspect of oneself and making it visible and manifest. He shows how it is possible to free the heart from material desires and proceed in the direction of the world of Truth which will fulfill the needs of the soul. Gradually, the inner being becomes manifest and finds luminosity, which dominates bodily desires so that they can no longer be seen. He emphasizes that worship is one of the means by which one can reach fulfillment in this sphere, as when he says in the *Išārāt*:

> "Worship by the mystic exercising mortification and aspiring to the development of the faculties of his soul, like the power of imagination, (will help him) draw his faculty away from the side of pride and error and attract it in the direction of the court of God, so that when the outer and inner being come face to face with the manifestations of God, the aforementioned faculty will be in harmony and unanimity."[9]

It is interesting to note at this point that in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* Ibn Sina speaks in an allegorical manner of the stations that the mystics or brothers of truth must reach. As an example he says that becoming a hedgehog is the symbol of pulling the head down into the body and seclusion from crowds and donning the garment of mortification. In the book of the *Išārāt* he illustrates stage by stage the way of attaining the stations. He defines asceticism and mortification on the way to union with God:

> " Then (the mystic) needs mortification; in mortification there are three goals: first is creating a distance between everything which is not God and the way to God, second is impelling the carnal soul *(nafs al-ammāra)* to do the bidding of the tranquil soul *(nafs al-muṭma'inna)* with the aim of attracting the faculty of imagination and dream to the side of imagination, which is in agreement with the holy command, and keeping it away from imaginings, which are suitable to the material world. Third is developing the sensibility of the inner self so that it can receive awareness."[10]

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* Ibn Sina exhorts the brothers of truth to: " Shed your skins like the snakes do in the molting season." This can be compared with statements on the same subject in the *Išārāt* when Ibn Sina defines the stations of the mystics: "There are stations for the mystics which separate them from others in this world. They are concealed in their bodies, and when they shed their bodies and become free from them, they come together in the world of holiness."[11]

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[9] Ibn Sina, *ibid.*, p. 199.

[10] Ibn Sina, *Kitāb al-išārāt*, p. 202.

[11] Ibn Sina, *ibid.*, p. 198.

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* Ibn Sina uses the form of allegory to discuss the need to take poison in order to remain alive, to love death as well as courage to acquire the tranquility of the salamander in the face of the fire. In the *Maqāmāt al-ʿārifīn* he states, "The mystic is brave. How could he not be, now that he is no longer afraid of death?" [12]

In the section of the story (*ḥadīṯ*) of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair,* when the imprisoned bird, catches sight of the free birds he remembers that also he used to fly at one time, and from that moment on all his being is involved in reconstructing that memory, which shows itself to him in the intensity of his longing. He wishes to be free from his prison. As a result he makes known this heartfelt desire to the freed birds or mystics or brothers of truth. This desire is so strong in the imprisoned bird that every other thing in the world has become nothing in comparison with this, " They reminded me of what I had forgotten and it spoiled all that to which I had become accustomed. It troubled me so that I was dissolved with grief or my soul departed from me with regret. I called and cried out to them from behind my bars to come close and teach me how to find a solution which results in the deliverance from what distressed me."

In the *Maqāmāt al-ʿārifīn* Ibn Sina calls this level 'will' (*irāda*), which he sees as the introduction to the stations. It is the state which follows upon the initial awakening. In the opinion of the author 'will' is followed by the stage of mortification, which is identical with setting out to reach the stations. In the *Išārāt* he describes 'will' in these words, "The first level in the movement of the mystics is that thing which they themselves call 'will'. This consists of the desire which is manifested in the whole body with the logical certitude of insight or which arrives through sincerity and heartfelt peace and which is the claw by means of which one can grasp the strong rope (*ʿurwat al-wuṯqā*)."[13] Badī' uz-zamān Furūzānfarr explains this as follows: "The search is a movement of the heart towards perfection without fixing it upon a specific point and when the movement becomes directed toward a specified point, and the object of search becomes specific, the search changes to will."[14]

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* the imprisoned bird recalls how the birds first help in liberating him from the prison and then instruct him about the series of levels which lie ahead of him. For the reader who is not familiar with the philosophical reasoning of Ibn Sina it is not clear from this text how the free birds help the imprisoned bird to leave the prison with wings and to fly with the bonds still tied to his feet. This point is, however, explained in the ninth class of the *Maqāmāt al-ʿārifīn* in the continuation of the statement that once

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[12] Ibn Sina, *ibid.*, p. 206.

[13] Ibn Sina, *ibid.*, p. 202.

[14] Furūzānfarr, "*Abū Alī wa taṣawwuf*," *Jašn-nāma-yi Ibn Sīnā*, vol. II, p. 192.

the 'will' is present, it becomes time for the disciple to engage in mortification.

In this class Ibn Sina maintains that there are three levels of mortification. The first is that the disciple removes everything which is not divine from the way to Truth. The second is that he makes the carnal soul submissive to the tranquil soul, and the third is that he makes his inner self so sensitive that the spirit becomes able to receive inspirations. He then goes on to discuss ways of reaching these three levels. Thus he considers true asceticism, or the purifying of the inner being from all worldly attachments, to be a help in attaining the first level. He also emphasizes the need for worship linked with meditation. He holds that hearing voices which impel the spiritual faculties to do good help the mystic to reach the second level and that pure and sensitive love, which is devoid of passion, can be put in the service of mystics who are progressing to the third level of mortification.

B. Flight in the direction of the angels

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair,* after the imprisoned bird has demonstrated his intense desire for travelling the way by affirming his friendship and sincerity and has convinced the others that he is truly one of the brothers of Truth, he learns from them how some of the pain caused by his imprisonment can be cured by growing wings. This will enable him to leave the prison and fly with the other birds to the nine mountains. In the ninth class Ibn Sina says, "Then his inner being moves in the direction of holiness and becomes joined with the spirit."[15]

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair,* when the birds pass the ninth heaven, they arrive at the city of the Great King, where they see the light of the divine beauty. The question is on which level of the way of the mystics or birds does God take form and reveal His divine beauty and do they actually fly to heaven and see God in a certain place in the heavens or does this viewing take place in the heart of the mystic?

In the ninth class it is stated that when the mystic has completed all the levels of the way of mortification, his interior becomes transformed into a mirror which turns its face toward God, who showers magnanimous pleasures upon him.[16] At this point the mystic becomes negligent of himself and sees only the threshold of God. If he does notice himself at all, it is from the angle of a dispassionate observer and not with the aim of embellishing himself. It is at this point that union achieves completion.

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* there is a discussion about how the bird returns accompanied by the messenger of God who is an angel. This means that the

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[15] Ibn Sina, *Kitāb al-išārāt*, p. 202.

[16] Ibn Sina, *Kitāb al-išārāt,* p. 204.

messenger of God becomes the master of the law and divine command in the inner self of the bird. By means of the angel the bird is able to oblige the hunter, who guarantees the dispensation of the natural law to obey him or, in other words, he is able to bring about supernatural changes in the order which exists in the material world, "He said, 'None is able to unbind the snares from your legs except those who tied them. I will send them a messenger, so as to oblige them to satisfy you and remove the snares from your legs'. Now we are on the path accompanied by the Messenger."

In the *Maqāmat al-ʿārifīn* Ibn Sina shows that after the mystic has transcended the levels of mortification and reached the stations, he becomes able to perform miracles and do supernatural things, "Perhaps you will hear news about the mystics which are about things contrary to nature and you will want to contradict them. For example if they say that the mystic asks for rain for the people and it rains or he searches for a cure for someone and he is cured."[17]

This point is corroborated by the following passage found in the *Risāla-yi nafs* in which the author points out, "When the soul of a person reaches the highest degree of perfection in honor, that soul exercises influence on the world of principles, and the results of his prayers become visible like rain and snow and clouds and even the destruction of a people which he has requested."[18]

In the *Risāla-yi nafs* Ibn Sina relates these supernatural faculties to the soul of the prophet but does not deny that the souls of others are able to reach the same level. This is a level in which the angels of the world of the unseen appear to him in human form and speak to him. He concludes that the souls of prophets and sages are at this level. In the *Dāniš-nāma* Ibn Sina maintains that the person who reaches this level is the vice-regent of God on earth and he is able to perform miracles. This is the highest level of ascension of the human soul known to him and is the equivalent of angelhood.[19]

In conclusion, Ibn Sina defines the soul of the mystic or prophet or sage in an identical manner and he considers the ultimate goal of the true way of the mystic to be union with the station of prophethood, which is the same as the station of the wisdom of the philosophers.

In the acquittance (*barāʾa*) of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* Ibn Sina recounts how he once described his own spiritual journey, in which he depicts himself as a bird among a flock of birds. Some of the listeners imagined that he is crazy and claim that it is impossible for a human being to fly in the direction of the angels, "Which brother, when my story struck his ear, said, 'I see that your intellect is touched and insanity has fallen upon you. No, by God, you did

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[17] Ibn Sina, *ibid.*, p. 209.

[18] Ibn Sina, *Risāla-yi nafs*, ed. ʿAmīd, p. 74.

[19] Ibn Sina, *Dāniš-nāma (ṭabīʿiyāṭ)*, ed. Miškāt, p. 145 f.

not fly, it is your reason that has flown away and you were not hunted, rather your mind was hunted. How does Man fly or a bird speak?'" The following quotation from the *Išārāt* discusses the same problem, "There are agents concealed in the interior of the mystics and matters which cause them to manifest themselves. These matters lead some people to deny them while for other people they represent great works."[20] Regarding the same subject he states that "The Truth Itself is loftier than to be a drinking place for every comer, or a thing to be viewed except by one after another. That is why what is included in this part of the work is an object of ridicule for the ignorant, and an idea for the scholar. Thus, one who listens to it and is then revolted by it must accuse his soul of not being appropriate for it. Every being is directed toward that for which it is created.[21] Surely thy Lord, He is the All-mighty, the All-compassionate. (*Qur.* 26: 191)

[20]Ibn Sina, *Kitāb al-išārāt*, p. 198.

[21] This is an extract from the book of *Ibn Sina and Mysticism,* by Inati, p. 91, the Arabic text is found in Ibn Sina, *Kitāb al-išārāt*, ed. Forget, p. 207.

Conclusions

In the first chapter of the present study, I have discussed the life of Ibn Sina from the point of view of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*, and attempted to show that the *Risāla-yi sarguẕašt* and the *Risālat uṭ-tair* can be regarded as one book of instruction. Moreover, I have analyzed a few important historical moments of Ibn Sina's life, such as the date of his birth and the dates of his journeys, examined their exactitude and suggested new solutions.

Afterwards, I have tried to draw a distinction between the historical Ibn Sina and the mythical personage. Finally, I have attempted to prove that the life he reportedly led was (or was constructed to be) congruent with his philosophical doctrine. It is with this in mind that I have discussed the life of Ibn Sina within the context of his studies, his journeys and his circle of students.

The concern of the second chapter has been to describe the extant and available manuscripts of Ibn Sina's *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*, determine their age, interdependence and relationship to the archetype of the text on the basis of external and internal criteria. To reach this goal, I have first introduced the extant Mss. of the *Risāla.* Then, I have discussed twenty-four Mss. which I have seen. The next step has been to present the Mss. which I chose for use in this study. I have also discussed the printed editions of the Epistle in Arabic and the printed translations of the Epistle in European languages. I have introduced and described the available manuscripts of the Persian translation of the Epistle. I have described the extant manuscripts of the Persian and Arabic commentaries made on the Epistle. Finally, the transmission of the text of the *Risāla* has been discussed.

The third chapter contains a text edition which is based on the oldest extant manuscript of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. This is based on what I judged to be the thirteen best manuscripts. Variant readings are given in the apparatus.

The fourth chapter has been devoted to a new English translation of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. In this chapter, I have tried to be as faithful as possible to the reconstructed text of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair.*

In the fifth chapter, I have tried to show that the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* of Ibn Sina is a practical treatise for the brothers of truth or brothers of purity, who have separated themselves from the followers of the bestial soul by

acquiring knowledge and disciplining the soul and have heeded the summons of the Herald of the Unseen. These brothers have been summoned by Ibn Sina to partake in a journey with him, which will lead to union with the source of light and acquisition of knowledge and an understanding of the station of wisdom. In this chapter, I have tried to illustrate how Ibn Sina has employed nine creatures, the hedgehog, the snake, the worm or the ant, the scorpion, the bird, the ostrich, the viper, the salamander and the bat, to symbolize the nine mountains, nine heavens, nine stations which are described in the section of the story of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*.

In the sixth chapter, I have investigated the literary background of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. To be more specific, I have first discussed the semantic and historical background of the two terms *risāla* and *ṭair*. Then I have introduced some mythical and natural birds such as Sīmurġ, 'Anqā and dove. I have also discussed the influence of the *Qur'ān* on the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. Finally, I have made a comparison of the style of composition of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and Ibn Sina's other works. It is in this chapter that I have concluded that Ibn Sina employs a style of composition in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* which is completely different from that of all his other works.

The seventh chapter has been confined to the relation between the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and *Kalīla wa Dimna*. In this chapter I have described *Kalīla wa Dimna* in general and the story of the ring-dove in particular, as one of Ibn Sina's most important sources in writing his *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. To establish my hypothesis I have first given a short history of *Kalīla wa Dimna,* then I have tried to illustrate the relation of Ibn Sina, Ibn al-Muqaffa' and Burzūya to *Kalīla wa Dimna*. Finally, by means of a comparison between the contents of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and the story of the ringdove, I have attempted to show the influence of *Kalīla wa Dimna* on the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*.

In the eighth chapter I have discussed the influence of the *Rasā'il ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* on the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. In order to establish my theory, I have consulted four treatises of the *Rasā'il ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* and attempted to demonstrate the striking likeness, in content and structure, between the *Rasā'il ixwān aṣ-ṣafā* and the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. In this chapter I have come to the conclusion that despite the relative silence of the biographers, not only was Ibn Sina acquainted with the *Rasā'il ixwān aṣ-ṣafā,* but he had studied them so carefully that they formed part of his intellectual stock. In writing the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* he does not refer to the different chapters of the *Rasā'il* of the *Ixwān* point by point in a specific manner, but he obviously had the contents of the *Rasā'il* present in his mind.

In the ninth chapter my aim has been to show how Ibn Sina in writing his *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* was inspired by the story of *mi'rāj*. In this chapter I have first examined the opinion of different scholars about the

authorship of the *Mi'rāj-nāma* and found that many of them claim that 'Ibādī was the author. Then I have attempted to illustrate the similarities and differences between the *Mi'rāj-nāma* and 'Ibādī's other work, the*Ṣūfī-nāma*. Aside from all the similarities and differences it is hard to believe that the author of the two books could be the same person, as they present two different doctrines in terms of the Ascension of the Prophet Muḥammad. Ibn Sina, emphasizes that it was a spiritual journey which occurred by means of the intellect, while in 'Ibādī's point of view, it was physical and took less than an hour. Therefore these two writings are completely and fundamentally different as regards both form and content, and it is impossible to assume that the author of these two works could be one and the same person. The *Ṣūfī-nāma* is a work on Ṣūfism, which presents the world view of a *ṣūfī*, and the *Mi'rāj-nāma* is a philosophical and mystical work expressing the viewpoint of the philosopher/mystic, which could be termed the philosophical testament of Ibn Sina. This chapter concludes with a comparison of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and the *Mi'rāj-nāma*

The tenth chapter has been confined to a comparison of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* and Ibn Sina's last work, *al-Išārāt*. In this book, Ibn Sina discusses the stations of mystics (*maqāmāt al-'ārifīn*). In this chapter I have first discussed the possibility that the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* was written in Iṣfahān. The main support of my hypothesis comes from the book of *al-Išārāt wa't-tanbīhāt,* considered to be the last book written by Ibn Sina, in which the discussion of many points, especially in the section on the stations of the mystics, is so similar to the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* that one can explicate the treatise with the help of passages from this section. It is noteworthy that in this book Ibn Sina gives a description of the stations of the mystics, and in no other work does he speak of these matters with such clarity. It is possible to conclude that in the last years of his life Ibn Sina reached the ninth level of his Oriental wisdom and that he crystallized his theory and formulated it clearly in the *Išārāt*. At the same time he illustrated his theory in the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*.

From the study in the foregoing chapters it becomes clear that *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* of Ibn Sina is a book of instruction in which he illustrates for his students that the way of the Perfect Man is difficult and full of searching and that the devotee must travel it with the help of like-minded, trustworthy friends. At each level of the way they should help one another and thereby create the means of salvation of the group. Individuals possess different moral qualities and by travelling together they all enjoy the fruits of the different qualities; thus each quality comes within the reach of all the devotees at every given stage of the way. When they all act within the mould of one body, all of them enjoy a share in the

good, whereas if the individual is alone and without support, there is a big risk that he will face failure already at the first station.

In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* Ibn Sina gives priority to brotherhood and union and understanding unicity (*tawḥīd*) at the very heart of multiplicity. He believes that, in order to return to the source of divinity and unite with the Active Intellect, it is necessary to gather together the dispersed multiple principles which are the result of the forms of the material world and make them into one. The most perfect example of this is the state of disunion of the human being, who contains all the perfect faculties in potentiality within himself. According to the *Qur'ān,* God taught him all the names and gave him knowledge that surpasses that of the angels. The bird in the flock before the fall is a symbol of the material intellect, *hayūlā*, which is untried in the matters of the world and has not become an angel. He is deceived by his enemy, Satan, and by the grain of multiplicity, and falls into the material world, which is the prison of light. The spirit with all its faculties has been captured in this world in the prison of the body. He lives in the world of multiplicity which is dominated by the interests of the imperious soul (*nafs al-ammāra*). In the opinion of Ibn Sina, when individuals break this wall of egoism and unite their multiple bodies, they experience the unity and oneness characteristic of the world of the spirit already here in the world of multiplicity.

When the devotee experiences union in this manner in the world of multiplicity, it results in union within union That is, he returns to the place which he abandoned at the first stage. The end of this return is mixed with insight, intelligence and wisdom, and the individual who has acquired these qualities will not be deceived a second time by the grain of multiplicity. In the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* Ibn Sina does not speak directly of union within union, but he illustrates it in the form of the desire of the birds. He believes that, as long as the bonds of life are attached to the foot, union within union, which is the same as the world of annihilation in God (*fanā bi-'llāh*) and remaining in God (*baqā bi-'llāh*) of the Ṣūfis, will not be realized.

Ibn Sina advances as far as to the level of unity in multiplicity; he goes as far as to the viewing of the Active Intellect by his soul, designated as "I". He makes the attainment of the level of unity within unity dependent on the time when the bonds will be removed from the foot of the bird and he will fly to the world of the spirit.

In conclusion, the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* of Ibn Sina is an example of a *futuwwa-nāma* or an *uxuwwa-nāma* of the Ṣūfis or mystics, in which it is demonstrated how divine union overcomes the animal and material world of the animal soul and its attachments. The devotee reaches the level of insight into the rational world by experiencing the hardships of the way. The gradual understanding of the rational world is manifested at the level

of the practical intellect in the pure morals and right behavior demonstrated by the devotee. At the level of the theoretical intellect, it is manifested by the faculty of understanding rational ideas and knowledge which cannot be fathomed by ordinary individuals. It describes how the world of inspiration and meditation is surpassed and the Truth (*ḥaqīqa*) is witnessed without intermediary, or in other words, the world is viewed with the eye of insight.

At the end it must be pointed out that the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair* has five parts. In the introduction, which was designated as "complaint" (*šikāya*) in the present study, Ibn Sina refers to the pain which is pressing on his breast and reveals its dimensions stage by stage in the sections *waṣīyya*, *ḥadīṯ*, *risāla* and *barā'a*. He says that the existence of union is the means of diminishing the burden of sorrow, and he demonstrates this union stage by stage. He speaks of rejecting false friends and illustrates this in each of the other four stages. He speaks of true friends and illustrates how they act in four different forms at each of the four stages.

Ibn Sina speaks of the divine country which is the birthplace of the brothers of truth; he speaks of the Herald of the Unseen and of the awakening which is the first step and of the spiritual journey. Thus in the short introduction he sows the seed of all the subjects of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*. He illustrates his alienation by the complaint and describes how he is seeking his spiritual country and his spiritual kin and how with the help of the brothers of truth he intends to return to his home. (This discussion has been illustrated in detail in the chapter on the *Ixwān aṣ-ṣafā*).

In the testament (*waṣīyya*) he prepares the devotee stage by stage and tells him that if he intends to make the spiritual journey in his company, he must accomplish the stations of the mystics. He illustrates each of these stations by associating it with the special ability of a particular animal. He explains that when the devotee adopts this recommended behavior, the bestial soul will gradually come under the domination of the human soul. The story (*ḥadīṯ*) tells about the captivity of the soul from the stage of being torn away from its country of origin and falling into the snare of the hunter of matter until its awakening and growing of wings in the cage with the help of the mystic brothers. Then the way in which they reach an understanding of the world of the angels after having torn out the animal world is described. This is followed by a description of their visit to God (*ḥaqq*) and the divine mission which is entrusted to them in which they receive the ability to perform miracles so that they can issue orders to the hunter of nature and act in contradiction to his laws.

In the mission (*risāla*) the bird returns from his 'ascension' (*mi'rāj*) announces his mission to men which is to describe God in his pure perfection and pure beauty. At this level he becomes the Summoner. In

'acquittance' (*barā'a*) he draws the line between himself and the hypocritical friends and materialists, who have worldly attachments around their necks and feet and who reject his words. He considers himself innocent of their accusation, while they want to show themselves to be his friends and cure him of the expression of insanity. In the opinion of Ibn Sina, what they think is intelligence are faculties in the service of their imagination and passion. It is for this reason that they believe Ibn Sina or the wise bird to be insane and try to cure him with his own remedy, he who is the most skilled of doctors.

At the end it is possible to conclude not only that the treatise is a polished work of reasoning, but that, from the viewpoint of form and construction, each section is like the carefully formed link of a chain which leads forward to the next section.

Appendices

A. Technical terms

Nafs (soul) in Ibn Sina's philosophical system has three divisions;
1) *Nafs-i nabātī* the vegetative soul
The vegetative soul possesses three faculties; *ġāzīya* (nutrition), *nāmīya* (growth) and *muwallida* (reproduction).
2) *Nafs-i ḥaiwānī* (the animal soul).
The animal soul has two faculties; *kunāyī,*[1] muḥarraka (the motive) and *andar yābī* (perceptive).
The motive faculty is of two kinds:
Šahwānī (the faculty of desire) and *ġaźbānī* (the faculty of anger).
Andar yābī, *mudraka* [2] (the faculty of perception)
This faculty can be divided into two parts, *ḥiss-i żāhir* (the external senses) and *ḥiss-i bāṭin* (the internal senses) *ḥiss-i żāhir* (the external senses) are: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. *Ḥiss-i bāṭin* (the faculty of internal perception) are five: *ḥiss-i muštarak* (the faculty of fantasy i.e. *sensus communis), quwwat-i muṣawarra* (the faculty of representation), *quwwat-i wahm* (the faculty of sensitive imagination): *quwat-i mutaxayyala* (the faculty of estimation), and *quwwat-i ḥāfiża* (the faculty of recollection).[3]
3) *Nafs-i insānī* (the human soul)
Nafs-i insānī or *'aql-i nāṭiqa*[4](the human rational soul) is also divided into two faculties which both are called intelligence;
'Aql-i 'amalī (the practical intelligence) and *'aql-i nażarī* (the theoretical intelligence).
'Aql-i 'amalī (the practical intelligence) is the principal of movement of the human body. According to Ibn Sina's philosophical system, this

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[1] Ibn Sina, *Dāniš-nāma,* p. 80.
[2] Ibn Sina, *Risāla-yi nafs*, p. 15.
[3] Ibn Sina, *Dāniš-nāma,* p. 95-97.
[4] Ibn Sina, *Risāla-yi nafs*, p. 23.

faculty must govern all the other above-mentioned faculties in order for the soul to attain the higher state of intelligence. In other words the other faculties of the vegetative and animal soul must be subordinated to it. When this faculty is the governor of the bodily faculties the result will be excellent morals and in the absence of such a control bad morals will appear.[5]

'Aql-i nażarī (the theoretical intelligence) receives the impressions of the universal form and abstract them from matter. If these forms are already abstracts in themselves, it receives them; if not, it makes them immaterial by abstraction.

The theoretical intelligence has four divisions: *'Aql-i hayuālnī* or *bi'l-quwwa* (the potential intelligence). In Ibn Sina's philosophical terminology, *'aql-i hayūlā* denotes absolute potentiality in which nothing has yet become actual, nor has the instrument of its actualization even been acquired. This faculty of the potential intelligence which is related to the abstract immaterial forms at its first stage is present in every human individual. It is called *hayūlā* (material) in view of its resemblance to primary matter.

Hhayūlā (*intellectus in habitu).* This faculty comes to the soul when it has acquired the primary intelligibles without going through the process of learning. An example of this is the statement that the whole is greater than the part.[6] At this stage the soul also attains the secondary intelligibles. If it is very weak, it does this by means of reflection *(fikr)* or if it is stronger by means of intuition.

'Aql-i bi-fi'l or *'aql-i muktasab* (the acquired intelligence). It is also called actual intellect. This is the fourth degree of intelligence in the system of Ibn Sina's philosophy. At this point the potential intellect becomes actual, in other words *intellectus in habitu* turns into complete actuality in such a way that when the potential intellect makes some sort of contact with it, certain forms are actually imprinted on the former from the latter.

'Aql-i mustafād (the acquired intelligence).

Nafs-i qudsī (the Sacred soul) It is related to the soul of the great prophets. When their soul reaches a sublime stage, it acquires the excellent (sacred) faculty of the soul. At this point the individual acquires intelligible without a teacher or a book. The world of intelligence presents itself to him by means of revelation.[7]

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[5] Ibn Sina, *ibid.,* p. 24.

[6] Ibn Sina, *ibid.,* p. 25.

[7] Ibn Sina, *Dāniš-nāma,* p. 145.

Waḥy (revelation). This is a connection between angels and the soul of human beings. By means of revelation the individual can be informed and as a result changes the world of matter and performs miracles.[8]

[8] Ibn Sina, *ibid.*, p. 145.

B. A new Persian translation of the *Risālat uṭ-ṭair*

بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

رساله الطیر رساله ای است رمز آمیز، درشرح پیوستن به دانش حقیقی.

هیچ یك از برادران مرا آنقدر شنوایی هست، که من بتوانم بخشی از اندوهم را با او بگویم؟ شاید که همدردی او بخشی از دردهای مرا بکاهد. براستی که دوست می تواند سینه برادرش را از غم بپالاید، اگر که به هنگام سختی یکرنگیش را نیالاید. اما چنین دوستی آزموده ای کجا می توان یافت؟ آنگاه که دوستی [چون] بازرگانی گردیده، دوست بدوستی هنگامی روی می آورد که هدفی در میان باشد، وبوقت بی نیازی بدان پشت می کند. از یار کسی دیداری نمی کند مگر که بیماری رخداده باشد، واز دوست یادی نمی شود، مگر که غرضی به یاد آمده باشد. خدایا [همه چنانند] مگر برادرانی که خویشاوندی خدایی آنان را گرد هم آورده باشد، ونزدیکی آسمانی میانشان پیوند زده باشد. اینان کسانی هستند، که زنگار تردید را از نهانخانه دل زدوده اند، وبه ندای سروش خداوندی جمع شده اند.

ای راستین برادران! [در جهان] پراکنده شوید! [ودوباره] گردهم آئید تا پرده از اسرار دل خویش پیش روی هم بردارید! همدیگر را بیآموزید و یکدیگر را کمال ببخشید!

ای راستین برادران! سرخود رانهان کنید! چونان پنهان کردن خارپشتان. درونتان را آشکار کنید وبیرونتان را پنهان کنید. به خداوندی خدا که تابش وفروغ از آن درون است وخاموشی برای بیرون.

ای راستین برادران! پوست خویش را بشکافید به سان ماران به هنگام پوست اندازان! آرام وبی صدا روید چونان کرمان! همسان کژدم باشید و سلاح خویش همآره بدوش کشید! که شیطان به نیرنگ از پشت بر آدمی می تازد.

زهربنوشید تاخوش زندگانی کنید! مرگ را دوست بدارید تا زنده بمانید! همواره بپرید وبریك آشیان بازنگردید! که پرندگان را از آشیانه بگیرند. اگر نداشتن بال وبالتان است آنرا بربائید و پیروزمند برآئید، که برترین پیشگامان آنانند که در پرواز نیرومندانند.

به سان شترمرغان سنگهای آتشین فرو برید! چونان افعیان استخوانهای سخت را نرم کنید! سمندر باشید وبا اطمینان جامه از آتش در پوشید! همانند خفاشان از آشکار شدن در روز بپرهیزید! که خفاشان نیکوترین پرندگانند.
ای راستین برادران! باتوجه ترین مردم آنانند که درکار فردای خود می کوشند، وسست ترین مردم آنانند، که از پرداختن به کمال خود کوتاهی می کنند.
ای راستین برادران! چه جای شگفت است اگر فرشته خویشتن را به بد نیآلوید و[یا] ستوری خویشتن را به زشتکاری افکند، که شگفتی از آدمی است که خود را سرکشانه به گناه می سپارد وچهرهء [خداوندی خویش] را تباه می سازد ویا خود را بدست [گناه] می سپارد، آنگاه که جانش به نور خرد روشنی یافته است.
سوگند به وجود جاودانه خداوند که فرشته کمتر است از آدمی که به هنگام هجوم شهوت در برابر نفس پایداری می کند واز جایگاه خود برنمی گردد، وچارپا برتر است از آدمی که نتواند قوای شهوت را به وقت چیره شدن در خود خاموش سازد.

اینك بازگردیم به آغاز داستان:
گفتم که گروهی [از شکارچیان] در اندیشه شکار دامها گستردند، بندها نهادند ودانه ها پاشیدند، خود سر در گریبان کشیده در علفزار نهان شدند. من در میان خیل پرندگان بودم، آنگاه که بدیده [صیادان] آمدم، [آنان] به سرودهای نیکو مارا می خواندند. پیش روي خوراکی انبوه بود ویارانی آشنا. نه تردید در دل خویش راه دادیم ونه هدفشان را ناروا انگاشتیم. شتابان سر در پی آواز آشنا ودانه گذاشتیم، وبه ناگاه در میان بندها ودامها سرنگون گشتیم. حلقه های دام بر گردنمان حلقه شد وبندهای تور بر بالهایمان بسته شد ورشته نخ های تله بر پاهایمان گره شد.
یکباره در جنبش شتافتیم، دست آوردی غیر از تنگی وماندگی نیافتیم، [پس] تن به نابودی سپاردیم. هر یك سرکار خویش گرفتیم ودل از اندوه همدلی با یار تهی داشتیم ودرراه آزادی خود دست به نیرنگی گذاشتیم. [اگر چه هیچ حاصل برنداشتیم] چندی برآن حال بودیم [سرانجام] به دام خو کردیم و در قفس ها آرمیدیم.
تا آن روز که از میان بندها دیده گشودم وبر فراز خویش گروهی از پرندگان را دیدم که سرها وبالها از دامها بدر آورده بودند وتن از قفس ها رهانیده بودند وتنها در پاهایشان بازمانده پاره بندی را داشتند، که آنان را نه از پرواز باز مي داشت ونه تام وتمام رهایشان می گذاشت.

من با دیدن ایشان آنچه را که فراموش کرده بودم بیاد آوردم.
آنچه بدان خو گرفته بودم به رنج بدل شد، چونان که جان در تن من به زاری افتاد. از ورای میله های قفس ایشان را خواندم، که به نزدیك من در آیند ومرا چاره ای بنمایند، شاید که رها گردم. [ایشان] نیرنگ شکارچیان را بیاد آوردند واز من بیش از پیش گریختند. سوگندشان دادم به دوستی کهن وهمنشینی امن وپیمان ناشکسته، آنچنانکه اطمینان دلهایشان را استوار ساخت وتردید را ازسینه هایشان برماند، پس برمن گرد آمدند. از حالشان پرسیدم، یادآوری کردند که چگونه ایشان به بلا مبتلا گشتند وچسان امید از دست دادند وبا درد خو کردند. آنها پس از آن مرا درمان کردند. یاریم دادند تا بند از گردنم برداشتم، دام از بالهایم گشودم ودر قفس را باز کردم. به من گفته شد: «رهایی خویش راگرامی دار». از ایشان خواستم که پایم را نیز از حلقهء دام آزاد سازند، گفتند: «اگرما را توان آن بود خود بدان درمان پیش از آن می شتافتیم و پای از بند گشوده می داشتیم، چگونه بیمار ترا درمان کند؟»
به ما گفته شد: «که در پیش رویمان منازلی است که در آنها ایمن نخواهیم بود مگر از آنان بگذریم پس بدنبالمان روان شوتا ترا به راه راست هدایت کنیم.»
پس در میان دو لبه کوه خداوند در دره ای خرم وبارور-نه بلکه در دره ای سترون وبرهوت به پرواز درآمدیم. راندیم تا گاهیکه آن [دره] را در نوردیدیم و پس از آن به قله آن کوه درآمدیم. در آن دم در پیش رویمان هشت کوه دیگر دیدیم که دیده را بر بلندای آنان دست رسی نبود.
یکی از ما به دیگری گفت: «بشتابید ودراین جایگاه فرود نیایید زیرا که ما مادامیکه از آنان گذر نکرده ایم ایمن نخواهیم بود.» ما رنج بسیار بردیم تا خود را به ششمین قله رساندیم وپس از آن به قله هفتم درآمدیم. هنگامیکه به مرزهای آن کوه رسیدیم یکی از ما به دیگری گفت: «آیا زمان آن رسیده که دمی بیاسائیم، از آنرو که خستگی توانمان را برده است، گذشته از آن که میان ما ودشمنان ما راهی دور کشیده شده است.»
ما دیدیم که می توانیم به تن هایمان چنان نصیبی را ببخشیم، پس در قله آن کوه آرمیدیم. آنجا باغهایی بود پوشیده از مرغزار، باغچه های پر گل، درختان میوه وجویبارهای روان که زیبائیش دیده را مبهوت می ساخت، اشکال بی بدیلش خردها را می ربود و اذهان را شگفت زده می کرد.
درآنجا گوشمان سرشار ازآواز خوش پرندگان شد ومشاممان آکنده از عطرهای نیکوئی گشت که مشك وعنبر تازه در برابرشان هیچ می نمود. ما از میوه ها تناول کردیم واز رودبارها نوشیدیم و در آنجا چندان ماندیم که خستگی را از تن براندیم.

پس یکی از ما بدیگری گفت: « هیچ دامی مانند [باور] امن [بودن] نیست وهیچ رهایی مانند احتیاط. [بودن در] هیچ دژی نمی تواند [فرد را] از گمانهای بد مصون بدارد. اگر ماندن ما در اینجا بدرازا کشد ونتیجه در بیخبری دهد دشمنان ما از پشتمان در آیند ومارا بجویند. پس برخیزید وترك منزل کنید که هرچند اقامت در اینجا نیکو بنماید نیکوتر از سلامت نیست.»

آماده حرکت شدیم واز آن ناحیه خویشتن را بدر آوردیم وبه قله کوه هشتم فرود آمدیم که سراز بلندی به آسمان می سائید و گرداگردش آشیان پرندگان بود که من هرگز نه زیباتر از آواز آنان شنیده بودم ونه نیکوتر از رنگ ها وبی مانند تر از اشکال آنان دیده بودم. ونه دلپذیرتر از همنشینی آنان آزموده بودم.

آنگاه که در نزدیکی پرندگان منزل کردیم، ازاحسان ولطفشان چنان برخوردار شدیم که هرگز نمی توان آن را جبران کرد. آنگاه که میان ما وایشان در دوستی گشوده شد، شرح آنچه بر مارفته بود برایشان باز گفتیم، آنان با ما از در یاری در آمدند، یاد آوردند که در ورای این کوه شهری است، که پادشاه بزرگ در آن جایگاه دارد. هر ستمدیده ای که براو پناه برد وبر او توکل کند، او بار آن سختی را با توانایی وپشتیبانی از پشت اوبر می دارد.

ما بدانچه گفتند دل سپردیم وروی به شهر پادشاه آوردیم تا آنگاه که به شهر در آمدیم وچشم به راه اجازتش دوختیم. پس فرمان دخول تازه واردین رسید وما درکاخش وارد شدیم. در برابر ما صحنی بود که وصفش در جایی نیامده است. پس از برابر دیدگانمان پرده برداشتند درکنار آن صحنی دیدیم چنان بیکران وتابان که صحن نخستین در برابرش ناچیز می نمود. همچنان رفتیم تا بخدمت پادشاه رسیدیم. پرده از برابر ما برداشتند وجمال پادشاه را هویدا کردند.

دلهایمان [بدیدارش] در او بسته شد. آن چنان بی خویشتن شدیم که زبان شکایتمان بسته گشت. او برآنچه به ما رفته بود آگاهی یافت وبه لطفش هوشیاری را به ما بازگرداند به گونه ای که برگفتگوی با او دلیر شدیم وبه تماشای پیش رو نشستیم وقصه خویش با او باز گفتیم. گفت: «تنها کسانی می توانند گره از پایتان بگشایند که خود آن بند را بدان بسته اند من بسوی ایشان رسولی می فرستم تا ایشان را وادارد که بند از پایتان بردارند.*

بازگشتیم واکنون با فرشته در راهیم.

برادرانم در من می آویزند واز من می خواهند، که حکایت شکوه وفر پادشاه را برای ایشان باز گویم. من اورا با نهایت اختصار بوصف در خواهم آورد.

گفتم: « او پادشاهی ست که درخاطرت هر پرده ای از زیبایی نیآلوده به زشتی بسازی، او از آن فزونتر آید. هر کمال حقیقی از اوست وهر کاستی اگر چه به مجاز از او دوراست. زیبایی اورا رویی است وبخشش اورا دستی. کسی که خدمت او را گذارد سعادتمند گردد وآنکه از او روی برتابد زیان جهان بدو روی آورد.

هست برادری که چون قصه من بشنود بگوید: «پندارم که خردت دست خورده وبدان زیان رسیده وگرنه سوگند به خدا که تو به پرواز درنیامدی که عقلت از تو پریده وتو شکار نشدی که خردت بدام افتاده. کجا آدمی پرواز کند وکجا مرغی سخن بگوید. این صفرا ست که بر مزاجت چیره شده وخشکی است که به مغزت راه یافته. می بایست که دمکرده افتیمون بنوشی وبه گرمابه روی وتن در آب شیرین بشویی وروغن نیلوفر ببویی و خوراك مقوی تناول کنی وازبیداری دوری گزینی وسر از پراندیشگی بپردازی که پیش از این ترا بخرد یافتیم.

سوگند به خداوند که آگاه از نهان جانهاست، ما ازرنج وپریشانی حال تو رنجوریم. هرچه بیشتر گفته شد من کمتر شنودم که بدترین سخنان آنست که تباه شود. پس امید یاری به الله دارم و از رای مردم برائت می جویم. هرکه جز این باور دارد زیان کار است. وسیعلم الذین ظلموا ای منقلب ینقلبون.

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